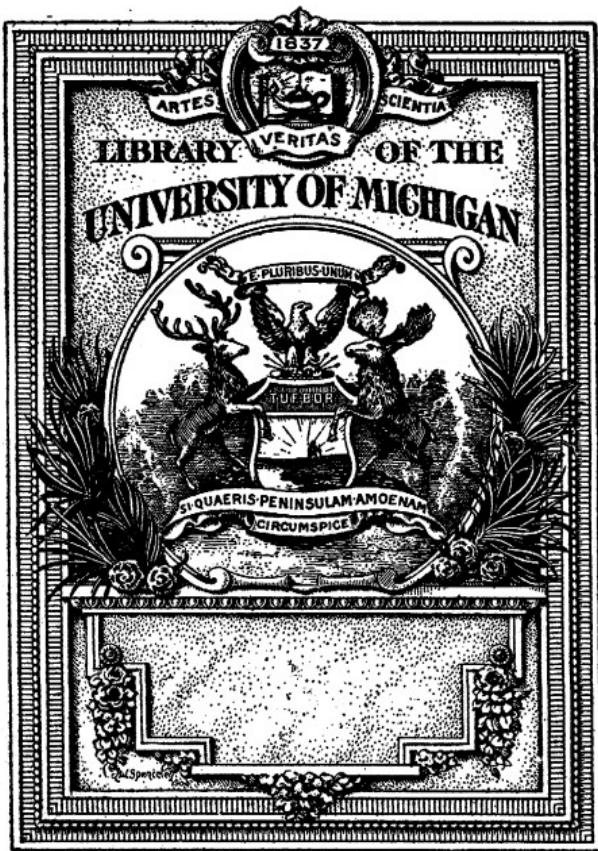


DANTE

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DIVINA COMMEDIA.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH,
IN THE METRE AND TRIPLE RHYME
OF THE ORIGINAL.

WITH NOTES.

BY

MRS. RAMSAY.

Paradiso.

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ERRATA—PARADISO.

- Canto 6, v. 85, *for* “Became,” *read* “Become.”
„ 9, v. 107, *for* “here,” *read* “there.”
„ 15, end of v. 6, insert a full stop.
„ 22, v. 10, *for* “these,” *read* “then.”
„ 23, v. 58, *for* “ore,” *read* “lore.”
„ 25, v. 82, *for* “True,” *read* “The.”
„ 28, v. 94, *for* “choir,” *read* “quire.”
„ „ v. 118, *for* “for,” *read* “doth.”

THE
DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE.

PARADISO.

CANTO I.

Argument.

Invocation to Apollo.—Dante ascends from the terrestrial Paradise to the first sphere of Heaven.—Beatrice replies to some of his doubts.

THE glory of the Mover of each sphere
Pierces the Universe ; and yet doth shine
In one place more, in other parts less clear.

In heaven, where brightest is that light divine,
Was I, but know not how to tell again 5
The things I there beheld with mortal eyne.

Because, where our weak memory would fain
Go back unto that deep abyss, and trace

The vision it hath seen, it is in vain.

Truly, what I, when in the Holy Place,
Within the treasure of my mind could store,
Shall now be the material of my lays.

O good Apollo, for this last high lore,
Me with such portion of thy spirit fill,
That I may win the leaves thy laurel bore.

Till now, one summit of Parnassus' hill
Sufficed, but both by me must be possest,
The strife to enter which remaineth still.

Breathe thou thy inspiration in my breast,
As once, of old, when thou didst Marsyas draw
Forth from the sheath wherein his limbs were cased.

Divinest virtue, if to me thou show
Grace, that the shadow of the Blessed Land
Be manifestly sign'd upon my brow,

'Neath thy belovëd tree I then may stand,
And crown me with a garland of those leaves,
Whereof my subject and thy guiding hand

Shall make me worthy. And so rarely weaves,
Father, the hand of mortal such a wreath,
For king or poet, (whence our will receives

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Just blame) that yet a gladder joy should breathe
On the bright Delphic deity, when man
His brow with leaves Peneian garlandeth.

Great flame doth follow what small sparks began :
Perchance, with sweeter voice, one after me
May pray, and Cyrrha shall reply again.

By diverse gates doth mortal vision see
The lamp arise which lights the world from far ;
But with four circles join'd, and crosses three,

In better course, and 'neath a happier star,
It issues, and on earthly wax doth leave
A seal we by our weakness less do mar.

And thus 'twas morning there, while here the eve
Drew near, and from that hemisphere did fly
The shadows which the realms of earth receive,

When Beatrice unto the eastern sky
Her looks directed where the sunbeams burn :
No eagle gazes with so fix'd an eye.

And, as a second ray ye may discern
Come from the first, and then on high diffuse
Its light, as pilgrim who would homeward turn ;
Thus did her action in mine eyes infuse

Her image, and I follow'd in her trace,
And on the sun I gazed, beyond our use.

Much is permitted there which in this place
Must be forbidden ; for the bound'ry set
Unto the powers of our weak mortal race.

Not long I bore it ; nor so short that yet
I saw not sparkling lights around it play,
Like iron in the furnace at white-heat.

And suddenly it seem'd that day to day
Was added ; as if He who surely could
Had placed another sun in heaven's bright way.

And Beatrice, the while, unmoving stood,
And on the eternal spheres gazed fixédly ;
And I who look'd no longer on their flood

Of radiance, gazed on her, and seem'd to be
As Glaucus, tasting of the herb which made
Him consort of the Gods within the sea.

How to transcend humanity, is said
Not easily in words : this may suffice
For him on whom the grace divine will shed

Experience. Thou Love, who rul'st the skies,
If I were only what thou didst create

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Most late, thou knowest, for thou mad'st me rise

On high. The sphere which doth desiderate
Thee evermore, and thus for aye doth turn,
Recall'd me with the song which it hath set

To sweetest music : then did I discern
So much of heaven on fire with the sun's flame, 80
That ne'er was spread so wide a wat'ry bourne,

By rain or river. Thus in me became,
By this new sound, and burst of dazzling light,
So keen the wish to know from whence they came,

As never yet I felt. Then she whose sight 85
As deep as mine own thought transpierced my mind,
Before I spake, to calm my heart aright

Had oped her lips, and said : "With error blind,
Thy soul thou gross and ignorant dost make ;
And what thou else hadst seen, thou canst not find. 90

For thou art not on earth, as, in mistake,
Thou deem'st : the lightning, leaving its own site,
Ne'er fled so fast as thou this way didst take."

If I were now relieved from the first might
Of doubt, by the brief words she smiling said,
Now was I held in yet more tangled plight, 95

And spake : “ From my chief wonder am I stay’d ;
But yet I marvel how I thus can rise,
And o’er those airy substances have sped.”

Then, sighing as she spake, she turn’d her eyes 100
Towards me, with a look as pitiful
As mother’s on a son who raving lies,

And thus began : “ All things have order’d rule
Among themselves ; unto the Power Divine,
Thus Earth hath likeness. Here with insight full, 105

Each high Intelligence beholds the sign
Of Virtue everlasting ; the true end
Whereto is ever traced the normal line.

In the aforesaid order still do tend
All natures, suited to each diverse lot ; 110
And more or less they from their birth-place wend.

And thus by them are diverse havens sought,
On the great sea of being ; and each one
With instinct given to it as guide is fraught.

This beareth fire on high towards the moon ;
This ever in the human heart doth move ;
This binds the earth together. Nor alone
The creatures unintelligent do prove

100

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115

Its might, but also those who are endow'd

With the great gifts of intellect and love :

120

And Providence, which to its will hath bow'd

All things in order, with its radiant light

Aye stills the heaven wherein is the abode

Of that which swiftest speeds. As to a site

Decreed, we are sent upward by that cord

125

Which to its mark directs the dart aright.

True, as the form doth sometimes not accord

With the intention and the hand of Art,

Since the material to respond is hard :

Even thus, created beings oft depart

130

From their due course ; for they have power to stray

(Though bent aright) unto some other part,

As fire descending from the cloud ye may

Behold, if the first impetus they bore

To earth by pleasure false be turn'd away.

135

If well I deem, thou shouldst not marvel more

At this thy flight, than when a stream doth flow

From a high hill, descending to the shore.

More wondrous it would be, if thou, with no

Impediment, shouldst dwell on earth for aye,

140

Than if live flame should quietly rest below."

And then her glance once more she turn'd toward
the sky.

CANTO II.

Argument.

The Lunar Sphere.—Discourse concerning the nature of the Spots on the Moon.

O YE who in a little bark would fain
List to my words, and pass the surges o'er,
Behind my ship that, singing, ploughs the main,
Turn ye again to look upon the shore :
Seek not the ocean ; for it well may be,
Losing my track, ye err in peril sore.

The waves whereon I sail are, save by me,
Unfurrow'd ; then let Pallas waft me far,
Apollo guide me o'er the dangerous sea,
And Muses nine point out the polar star.
Ye other few, who for the angels' bread
Have early stretch'd your hands, (that food ye are

5

10

Still nourish'd by, unsated,) ye may lead
Your vessel through the high salt sea, and trace
My course among the waves which swiftly speed,

15

Smoothing my path again. The glorious race
Who pass'd by Colchis, when they did discern
Jason's strange husbandry, yet marvell'd less

Than ye at this my tale. The thirst, inborn
And aye unquench'd, for God's own kingdom, raised
Us swiftly as the starry myriads turn.

20

Still upward Beatrice intently gazed,
And I on her : perchance, an arrow's flight
No longer lasts than until I, amazed,

Beheld myself where a most wondrous sight
Attracted me ; and she from whom my care
Could not be hid, as beautiful as bright,

25

Now turn'd, and said : " Most gratefully we are
Bound to give thanks unto the grace divine,
Which hath conjoin'd us thus to the first star."

30

Meseem'd a cloud did o'er our heads incline,
Enfolding us, thick, solid, clear, and bright
As diamond whereon the sun doth shine.

The eternal pearl received us in its light,

As water doth the sunny ray contain,

35

Which penetrates, but nought doth disunite.

If I did in the body still remain,

Though here ye know not how one space doth bear

Another, (which, if substance entrance gain

In substance, must be,) more ye should prepare

40

To see that essence wherein we perceive

How with our nature God is join'd. And there

Shall we behold what we by faith receive

All undemonstrate, but in knowledge shed,

Like the primeval truth man doth believe.

45

“Lady, in spirit as devout,” I said,

“As may be, do I render thanks to Him

Who from the mortal world me far hath led.

But tell me what the traces are, which seem

To cloud this substance, and on earth below

50

Of Cain make men discourse in legends dim ?”

Somewhat she smiled, and said : “If mortals show

Error within their thoughts, whene'er the key

Of sense doth not unlock, thou shouldst not go

Transpiercēd with amaze ; since thou mayst see,

55

E'en when ye have the help of this same sense,

How short for flight the wings of reason be.

But tell me what thy mind doth evidence."

And I : "What in this region seems diverse,
I deem is caused by substance rare and dense." 60

And she : "In sooth a falsehood doth immerse
Thy faith, as thou shalt see, in pond'ring well
The argument I make, thereto adverse.

For lo ! in the eighth firmament there dwell
Stars, which in measurement of light and size 65
Differ, as less and more they do excel.

If rare and dense could act in such a wise,
In all should be one principle alone,
And more or less distributed, in guise

Proportion'd. Diverse virtues must be known,
As fruits of Formal Principles : and then,
Save one, all by thy reasoning were o'erthrown.

Again, if rarefaction, of that stain,
Were cause, of which thou ask'st, either in part
The matter of this planet must so wane, 75

Pierced through and through, or else it doth dispart
(As in a body, fat and lean do rest)
Its substance, changing with alternate art,

As leaves within a book. 'Twere manifest,
Then, in the sun's eclipse ; because its light 80
Were visible, if this first thought be just.

Not so : the other scan we now aright ;
And if it may be here disproved by me,
False shall thy judgment stand within thy sight.

If this rare part transpierce not, there must be 85
A limit, which as bound'ry doth abide,
Of that which thereunto is contrary :

And thence the solar rays should be descried
Reflected, even as objects in a glass,
The which behind it doth quicksilver hide. 90

Now thou wilt say that here this planet has
More darken'd ray than in each other part,
Since the refraction longer space must pass.

Experience an answer may impart
To this objection : if thou seek to prove ; 95
Which ever is the fountain of your art.

Three mirrors take, and two of them remove
From thee in the same equidistant space,
And further, 'twixt them then the other move :

Looking at them, a lamp behind thee place, 100

To light these mirrors in an equal line,
And from the three give back to thee its rays.

Though the most distant turn not to thy eyne
Of such great bulk, yet surely thou shalt know
How with the same resplendence each doth shine.

105

E'en as, beneath the sunbeam's stroke the snow,
Wholly dissolving, its first hue of white,
And primal cold, doth now no longer show,

Thy mind thus barren I would here aright
Inform with holy radiance, which shall burn,
Trembling unto thy glance with living light.

110

Know, in the heaven of peace divine, doth turn
A firmament within whose virtue lies
The essence of all things it doth inurn :

And the next heaven, which hath so many eyes,
Receives that essence in each influence
Distinct from it, which it doth yet comprise.

115

The other spheres in diverse ways dispense
The different virtues that from each do flow,
Disposing all to fitting ends. And thence

120

Those organs of the world do ever go,
As now thou mayst behold, from grade to grade,

Receive above, and give to that below.

Look well at me, how thus my course is sped
Unto the truth which here thou dost desire ;

125

And learn to cross the ford without my aid.

The power and motion of each holy fire,
As of the smith's strong arm the hammer's might,
By the blest Motive-Spirits must respire.

The heaven, made lovely thus with starry light,
Of the deep mind which guides it on its way
The image takes, and seals itself aright.

And as the soul within your mortal clay
In different limbs with diverse powers doth lie,
Even thus, unfolded in each planet's ray,

135

That Heavenly Influence doth multiply
Its goodness in the glittering sphere around,
Yet circles aye in its own unity.

Each diverse virtue differently is found
Join'd with the precious form it vivifies,
In which, as life within you, it is bound.

From the bright nature whence it doth arise,
The virtue mingled through the body glows,
As gladness that shines forth from living eyes.

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And hence it comes that light from light thus shows 145
A varied radiance ; not from dense and rare :
This is the Formal Principle whence flows,
Conform'd unto its essence, both the dark and clear.

CANTO III.

Argument.

In the Moon are seen the souls of those who have broken religious Vows.—Piccarda Donati relates her own History, and that of the Empress Constance.

THAT Sun, which first had warm'd my heart with love,
Thus of fair truth disclosed the sweet aspect,
While she did prove and eke again reprovè ;
And, to confess that now my intellect,
From error freed, with certitude was fraught,
To speak once more I raised my head erect.

But lo ! mine eyes a wondrous vision sought,
Which so intently kept my mind, that here
Of my confession I remember'd nought.

For even as in transparent glass and clear,
Or, it may be, in waters pure and still,
So shallow that their bed doth yet appear,

Our features seem the shadowy depths to fill,
So faintly that a pearl on forehead white
More plainly to our eyes is visible ;

15

Thus many faces dimly met my sight,
Intent to speak ; and error, contrary
To that which love 'twixt man and fount did light,

Now drew me to itself. Then suddenly,
Because of these as mirror'd forms I deem'd,
I turn'd, their semblance better to descry,

20

And nought I saw ; and turn'd again, where gleam'd
The lovely radiance of my gentle guide,
Which, smiling, from her holy glances beam'd.

“ Marvel not though I smile,” she then replied,
“ At this thy childish fantasy and low,
Because not yet on truth thy feet abide,

25

But wand'ring round, as is their wont, they go.
True substances are those thou dost perceive,
Allotted to this place by broken vow :

30

But speak with them, and hear, and then believe ;
For the true light which aye doth them inspire
Doth let them ne'er of truth the footsteps leave.”

Then I unto the Shade who did respire

Most eagerly for speech began to say,
Like one bewilder'd with too strong desire :

“ O spirit fortunate, who in the ray
Of life eternal dost the sweetness know,
Which he who hath not tasted never may

Attain to comprehend, I pray thee show
To me thy name and somewhat of your lot.”

She answer'd readily with smiling brow :

“ Our charity the gateway closeth not
To a just wish, save but as He who well
Would have his court with his own likeness fraught.

On earth a virgin sister did I dwell :
If heedfully on me thy mind be placed,
Though much my former beauty I excel,
This should not hide me. I, who here do rest,
Was erst Piccarda ; who, in soften'd light,
With others in the lowest sphere am blest.

Our hearts, which only in the pure delight
Of God's own Holy Spirit ever glow,
Rejoice at this his order form'd aright.

Our lot, which seemeth unto thee so low,
Is given to us, because by sad mischance,

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Neglected or made void hath been our vow.”

Whence I to her : “ Within your wondrous glance
There shines, resplendent, somewhat so divine,
It wholly changes that which I did once 60

Remember ; thus so tardy were my eyne.

But now the words thou speak’st do aid me well,
And thence a clearer memory is mine.

But ye who here are blest, I pray you, tell
If ye desire a higher place above, 65
More to behold, or nearer God to dwell ?”

That company my words appear’d to move
Somewhat to smile ; then, joyful, she replied,
And seem’d to glow in the first fire of love :

“ Brother, our will doth tranquilly abide 70
In charity, which makes us but desire
The thing we have, nor long for aught beside.

If to supernal heights we should aspire,
Our wills were then discordantly inclined
From His, who bade our wishes soar no higher ; 75

And discord in these zones ye may not find,
If here we needs must charity possess,
And to its nature well thou bend’st thy mind.

For 'tis essential to this life of bliss,
 To hold ourselves within the Will Divine,
 That thus our wills should be at one with His.

And we from threshold unto threshold shine,
 Throughout this realm ; yet all it pleaseth well,
 As pleasing Him who doth to his design

Conform our hearts. And surely here we dwell
 In peace for evermore ; this is the sea
 Whereto all Nature and Creation still

Are moved." And thus it was made clear to me
 How everywhere is Paradise in Heaven,
 Although God's highest favour therein be

In divers ways and divers measures given.
 As it doth chance, when sated with one kind
 Of food, we for another long, and even

The one is ask'd, the other is declined ;
 With words and gesture now I sought to learn
 What toil, unfinish'd thus, she had resign'd.

" A Lady dwelleth in a loftier bourne,
 There shrined by perfect life and deeds," she said,
 " According to whose rule the veil is worn,
 On earth ; that day and night be wholly sped

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Aye with the spouse who doth each vow receive,
Which love conform'd unto his will hath made.

Her steps to follow, early did I leave
The world, and clothed me in her garb, and vow'd
Obedience to her holy rule to give. 105

But men more used to evil than to good
Forth from the pleasant cloister me did bear :
God knoweth then in what sore plight I stood !

This other splendour which thou seëst here,
At my right hand, with light which doth excel
In all the soften'd glory of our sphere, 110

Had the same lot which unto me befel ;
She was a sister, and from off her brow
They tore the shadow of the sacred veil.

Though back unto the world constrain'd to go,
Against her will, and customs fair and right,
The veil she never from her heart did throw. 115

For the great Constance dwells within yon light :
The third and last of Suabia's race did spring
From her, and from the second Storm-wind's might." 120

Thus did she speak ; and then began to sing,
And singing "Ave Mary" pass'd away,

As in dark water sinks some heavy thing.

Mine eyes, that follow'd her departing ray
Far as they might, when she was wholly gone, 125
Return'd to where my greatest gladness lay,

And upon Beatrice they gazed alone ;
But, sooth, at first they scarcely might withstand
The dazzling light that in her visage shone :
Thus linger'd I, ere yet I utter'd my demand. 130

CANTO IV.



Argument.

Plato's doctrine of the Stars.—The different degrees of bliss
in Heaven.—Absolute and relative Will.

BETWEEN two kinds of food, equal in taste,
And equidistant, man might die, ere yet
He stretch'd out his hand to be possest
 Of either : and thus stands a lamb, when set
Between two hungry wolves, on either hand ; 5
And thus a dog between two deer doth wait.

My silence here I do not reprehend,
Suspended in this manner by my doubt,
Since it was needful ; nor do I commend.

Silent I stood : but my desire shone out,
Traced on my brow ; and thus more eagerly
Than if by spoken words, I knowledge sought.

Then Beatrice, as Daniel once, when he
 Erst of the Eastern Monarch soothed the ire
 Which wholly caused his deeds unjust to be, 15

Thus framed her speech : “ I see how thy desire
 Draws thee diversely ; and the wish thou hast
 Doth bind itself, and forth may not respire.

Thou reason’st : ‘ If a righteous will doth last,
 Why should another’s violence ’minish aught 20
 Of this my merit ? ’ Also thou art cast,

I wis, into perplexity and doubt,
 Deeming the soul returns unto the stars,
 According to the lore that Plato taught.

This is the question which within thee wars, 25
 Twofold, of equal weight : and therefore first
 I treat of that which most thy reason mars.

Moses, and Samuel, and he who erst
 The Saviour’s advent unto Man foreshow’d,
 And he who the Apocalypse rehearsed, 30

And seraph nearest to the throne of God,
 And Mary’s self, have in no other heaven,
 Than these same Shades thou seëst, their abode,
 Nor more nor fewer years to them are given :

- But all the primal zone do beautify, 35
And live sweet lives in divers manners, even
As fillèd with God's breath. Not here doth lie
Their lot ; but yet thou seest them in this sphere,
To show the rank they ever hold on high.

Such arguments thine intellect must hear, 40
Since aye by sense alone it apprehends
The things which, after, to thy mind appear.

And for this cause the Scripture condescends
Unto your faculties, with hid intent,
And unto God attributes feet and hands. 45

And Holy Church hath human aspect lent
To Gabriel and Michael, and to him
Once for the healing of blind Tobit sent.

That which Timæus of the souls doth deem
Is all unlike what here thou dost discern, 50
Since he believes the thing which doth but seem.

He saith, the soul doth to its star return,
Believing that from thence it hath come down,
When it on earth in human limbs is born.

And these his words, perchance, may well be shown
Of other guise than to the ear they sound,

And meriting not ridicule alone.

If he would say that to the starry bound
Returns the blame of ill, and praise of good,
Striking the truth his dart may well be found.

60

For, this same principle, misunderstood,
Nigh all the earth deceived ; and thus as Jove
And Mercury and Mars their names have stood.

The other doubt which here thy mind doth prove,
Less poison hath ; since in its evil lies
A lesser power thee from my side to move.

65

That this our justice unto mortal eyes
Should seem unjust, is yet an argument
Of faith, and not of noxious heresies.

But, that the truth I show thee be attain'd
By thee, and clearly to thy mind appear,
Even as thou wouldest, thy wish do I content.

70

If violence be when the sufferer
In nothing doth unto the force agree,
Herein these spirits no excuse do bear :

75

For Will, although it wills not, cannot be
Wholly extinguish'd ; but is like the flame
A thousand times bent downward forcibly.

And swerving much or little, in this blame,
Will follows force ; and thus did these, who could
Return unto the cloister whence they came.

Because, if here the will had firmly stood
Which made St. Lawrence fiery torment bear,
And Mutius stern to his own hand, they would

Have turn'd again to climb the holy stair,
When from the hands of violence set free :
But, sooth, such steadfast will is all too rare.

And by these words if gather'd up they be
With due regard, the fancy is disproved
Which else had often caused annoy to thee.

But now again thy mind to doubt is moved,
Of which thyself thou never canst divest,
Though wearily thou wouldest it were removed.

I have with certitude to thee exprest
That spirits of the blesseg cannot lie,
Since near to primal truth they ever rest.

Yet from Piccarda thou mayst hear that aye,
In heart, did Constance love the holy veil,
And thus her words to mine seem contrary.

But oft, my brother, where weak mortals dwell,

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To fly from peril, 'gainst their better thought,
The thing is done which left undone were well.

Even as Alcmæon, by his sire besought,
Slew his own mother ; and the fear to lose
Just piety, to impious deeds him brought.

105

And here I would into thy mind infuse
The precept that when force is mix'd with will,
Thereby offences may not find excuse.

Not wholly doth the mind consent, but still
Consents so much as wherein it doth fear,
Resisting, it may suffer greater ill.

110

Therefore, when thus Piccarda thou didst hear,
She spake of simple Will, whereas I show
The other : a like truth our words do bear."

Such was the holy river's silver flow,
That issues from the fountain of all truth,
It laid to rest each doubt my heart did know.

115

"Thou who God's love hast loved from thy first youth,"
I said, "divinest Lady, whose sweet speech
My soul doth inundate with light, in sooth
The faculties within me may not reach
So deep as to return thee grace for grace ;

120

But He who sees, and can, such lore may teach.

Our intellect, as plainly now I trace,
Can ne'er be satisfied till it attain

The Truth beyond which nothing true hath place.

It rests like a wild creature in its den,
There, when 'tis gain'd : and it may gain it well ;
Else each desire were frustrate and in vain.

Like offshoots from a tree, doubt aye doth dwell,
Born at the feet of truth : 'tis Nature's lure,
Which ever upward draws us to excel.

And this invites me, this makes me secure,
Lady, most rev'rently to seek from thee
Another truth which is to me obscure.

Fain would I know if broken vows may be
Made good with gifts, of power to satisfy
Your balance with just weight." I spake ; and she

Gazed on me with a look, wherein did lie
Such glowing love, and radiance so divine,
It wholly vanquishëd my strength : thus I
Turn'd back, and, wilder'd, did mine eyes to earth
incline.

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CANTO V.

Argument.

Beatrice replies to the questions of Dante concerning Vows.—
Ascent into Mercury, where are seen the souls of those
who have laboured for Fame.

“ IF in love’s burning beams to thee I glow,
Beyond the manner which on earth ye see,
And thou thereby with dazzled eyes dost go,
This should not seem a wondrous thing to thee,
For perfect vision aye, as it doth learn, 5
Thus to the good it knows moves speedily.

Within thy intellect mine eyes discern
The splendour of the sempiternal light,
Which, seen, alone still causes love to burn.

If other things seduce your love from right,
They are but a reflection of the ray,
Ill understood, which here doth greet thy sight. 10

Thou ask'st if with another gift ye may
 Fulfil a broken vow ; and thus again
 Secure the soul from that which doth affray."

15

Thus Beatrice anew began her strain,
 And even as one who stayeth not in speech,
 The holy words continued : " Among men
 The highest gift God's bounty unto each
 Hath given, and that to his great goodness still
 The most conform'd, and which He aye doth teach

As the most prized, is liberty of will ;
 Wherewith created things intelligent
 (And they alone) are gifted, good and ill

To choose. Thou seest (if hence thine argument)
 The vow's great value, if so fashionëd
 That God consenteth where thou dost consent ;

For, when 'twixt God and man such vow is made,
 Thou of this treasure mak'st a sacrifice,
 With thine own act, as I but now have said.

Then what, as compensation, may suffice ?
 If that thou shouldst have given thou usest well,
 Thou wouldst, from evil gain, good deeds should rise.

Now the chief point to thee is visible ;

20

25

30

But because Holy Church from this sets free,

35

Which seems to contradict the thing I tell,

A little while at table patiently

Thou yet must stay, since this strong food doth so

Assistance need till it digested be.

But ope thy mind to that which now I show,

40

And shut it fast within ; for though thou hear,

If thou retain not, thou dost nothing know.

Two things essentially a vow must bear :

The one, of what 'tis made ; the other part,

The compact in itself. This last may ne'er

45

Be cancell'd, nor may'st thou from thence depart,

And leave it unobserved ; concerning this,

Was what I now instill'd into thy heart :

And thus the Hebrews were constrain'd, I wis,

To offer, though the gift might chang'd be,

50

As thou dost know. The other part, which is

Named as material of the vow by thee,

May well be such that 'tis no deed of ill,

Though for some other off'ring changed. But see

That none transmute his load at his own will ;

55

For aye the keys of silver and of gold

Must turn, the due permission to fulfil.

And every change thou shouldst believe too bold,
Unless, as four in six, there be descried
The thing laid down in that which thou dost hold : 60

And thus, if by its worth it doth betide
That every balance be weigh'd down, it then
With other gifts may ne'er be satisfied.

By mortals let not random vows be ta'en :
Be faithful, nor do this in reckless mood, 65
As Jephthah in his off'ring wild and vain ;

For whom it had been better that he should
Have said, 'I sinn'd,' than to his promise hold,
And thus do worse. Such foolishness imbued

The mighty leader of the Greeks of old ; 70
Whence, for her beauty, by the salt sea-wave,
Iphigenia mourn'd : and still, when told,

Her tale moves every heart. Be then more grave,
Ye Christians, nor like feathers in the wind :
Think not that every stream hath power to lave. 75

To you are both the Testaments assign'd,
And Holy Church's Pastor, for a guide ;
Such aid, to save you, ample ye should find.

If, to mislead you, ill desire hath tried,
 Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep ; 80
 Lest e'en the Jew who doth among you 'bide
 Should mock you. Be not as the lambs who leap,
 In frolic play, and from their mothers' sight,
 Simple and wanton, flee to tempt the steep."

Thus Beatrice to me, as now I write ; 85
 And then with earnest longing raised her eyes
 To where the world hath most of life and light.

Her silence and changed aspect in like guise
 Did hush my greedy mind, which aye was fill'd
 With newer questions. As the arrow flies 90

And strikes the mark ere yet the cord is still'd,
 Thus to the second realm we soar'd aright.
 So joyful now my Lady I beheld,

That as she came within its splendour bright,
 More glorious grew its glittering ray, the while, 95
 And all the planet shone with fairer light.

And, if the star did change itself and smile,
 What then must I, who do a nature bear
 Transmutable ! As ye the fish beguile,
 Within a pool of water still and clear, 100

When tow'rd some object from without they draw,
Since like unto their food it doth appear,

More than a thousand splendours here I saw
Approach, and in each spirit-life was said :

“Lo ! one who makes our love more brightly glow !” 105

As nearer unto us each radiance sped,
The soul within more full of gladness shone,
In the clear lightning that from each was shed.

Think, reader, if the story here begun
Should now proceed no further, how in thee
Must wake desire the tale should yet go on ;

And thou thyself my ardent wish shalt see
To learn what life within those beings lay,
Who thus were now made manifest to me.

“O spirit fortunate, who seest the ray
Of the bright thrones of everlasting bliss,
Ere from life’s battle thou hast pass’d away,

We with the radiance shine, that here, I wis,
Floods all the heaven ; and if in thee be stirr’d
Desire of knowledge, learn at will from us.” 120

From one of those blest spirits this I heard,
And Beatrice continued then : “ Speak, speak,

Securely, and believe as in God's Word."

"To nestle in thy light I see thee seek
And shed its splendour forth from out thine eye ; 125
For, as thou smil'st, its coruscations wake.

But yet I know not who thou art, nor why,
Soul of high worth, thou dwellest in the sphere
Which hid by other rays from men doth lie."

Thus did I speak unto the light which here 130
Had now address'd me ; whence it shone more bright
Than at the first its splendour did appear :

And as the sun, who veils with too much light
His beams, when, for the heat, no more doth 'bide
The temp'rance of the misty vapours' might, 135

Thus, for more joy, the holy form did hide
Itself in rays that from its splendour spring ;
And veilëd, veilëd, then to me replied,

Even in the manner which the following song doth
sing.

CANTO VI.

Argument.

The Emperor Justinian recounts to Dante the Victories of the
Roman Eagles.

“WHEN Constantine had turn’d the eagle’s flight
Against the course of heaven, which erst it bore
With him who won Lavinia by his might,
A hundred and a hundred years and more,
On Europe’s verge the bird of God was stay’d
Near to the mountains whence it came, of yore.

It ruled, beneath the sacred pinions’ shade,
The world from hand to hand, until thereby,
While changing ever, in my grasp ’twas laid.

Cæsar I was ; Justinian still am I,
Who by the Holy Spirit erst was bent
To purge the laws’ vain superfluity.

And, ere upon this work I was intent,
 In Christ of but one nature did I ween,
 And wholly in this faith was I content :

15

But the blest Agapetus, who was then
 Chief pastor, did to the right faith sincere
 With pious words lead back my soul again.

Him I believed ; and now to me is clear
 The thing he spake : as thou dost well perceive,
 In contradictions, false and true appear.

20

Soon as with Holy Church I did believe,
 God's grace was pleased to breathe into my mind
 The lofty work ; and I all else did leave,

And to my Bélisarius assign'd
 My armies : he by the right hand of Heaven
 Was aided so that rest I well might find.

25

And now to thy first question have I given
 Reply ; but somewhat further still to show,
 I by its very nature here am driven :

30

That thou the reasoning may'st clearly know
 Of those who injure the most sacred sign,
 Both those who hold it, and who 'gainst it go.

Behold what virtues in it do combine,

To win it reverence ; since Pallas died
That through long ages might endure its reign.

Thou know'st that it in Alba did abide,
Three hundred years and more ; until the day
When three with three the battle for it tried.

Thou know'st its prowess, from the Sabine fray
Until Lucretia's grief, beneath seven kings,
Subduing still the neighb'ring tribes alway.

Thou know'st the rushing of those mighty wings,
When erst the noble Romans did it bear
'Gainst Brennus, Pyrrhus, and their bands : this brings 45

To Quintius, named from his neglected hair,
To Decii, and to Fabii, and to him,

Torquatus hight, the fame which I declare

With joy. This did the Arab glories dim
Of those who pass'd with Hannibal the rude
Wild rocks from whence the Po derives its stream.

'Neath this, in youth triumphant, Scipio stood,
And Pompey : to a mount anear thy home,
It seem'd with bitter cruelty imbued.

And, when the time ordain'd of Heaven had come,
That in its mode serene all earth were still'd,

Then Cæsar took it, by the will of Rome.

The deeds which it from Var to Rhine fulfill'd
Isère hath look'd on, and the Saône, and Seine,
And every valley whence the Rhone is fill'd.

60

When from Ravenna it came forth amain,
And leap'd the Rubicon, such flight it bore,
No skill to follow it hath tongue nor pen.

Its bands then turn'd towards Hispania's shore,
Then tow'rds Durazzo ; and Pharsalia smote,
That e'en the Nile's warm flood felt anguish sore.

65

It saw again Antandros, whence 'twas brought :
And Simoïs, and there where Hector lies :
With ill it there for Ptolemy was fraught.

Thence, like a thunder-bolt to Juba flies ;
Then to your western land did it return
And heard the call from Pompey's trump arise.

70

It caused, by the next standard-bearer borne,
Brutus and Cassius aye to howl in hell,
While Modena did with Perugia mourn.

75

For it, sad Cleopatra grieveth well ;
Whom, flying his victorious path before,
By the foul asp a dark, swift death befel.

With him it pass'd unto the Red Sea-shore ;
With him o'er all the world such peace it shed,
That wholly closed was Janus' mystic door.

But all the deeds which first to speak me led,
And all the after fame it did ensure,
Throughout the earthly realm it governëd,
Became in semblance paltry and obscure,
If the third Cæsar's power ye do admire,
With insight clear and with affection pure.

The living Justice who doth me inspire
Granted unto his hand the glory high
Of executing vengeance for his ire.

Now marvel here at that which I reply ;
With Titus afterwards it vengeance sought
Upon the vengeance of the ancient lie.

And when the Lombard tooth much hurt had
wrought

On Holy Church, beneath its wings once more
Did Charlemagne bring aid with vict'ry fraught.

Now may'st thou judge the men whom I before
Accused, and plainly see the guilt of those
Who are the cause of all your evil sore.

80

85

90

95

One to the public banner doth oppose 100
 The golden lilies ; one, in guileful part,
 The other takes : and which is worst, none knows.

E'en let the Ghibellines their wicked art
 Pursue 'neath other sign ; for ill they hold
 To this, who it and justice would dispart : 105

Nor 'gainst it be the younger Charles so bold,
 With all his Guelphs ; but let him fear the claws
 Which tore a fiercer lion's flesh, of old.

Full oft the children sorely weep, because
 The sire hath sinnéd ; thus he may not deem 110
 That God will for his lilies change the laws

Which guide his armies. In this starry beam,
 Are those good Spirits who did erst aspire
 To fame and honour : but wherein this dream

Hath from the true path turnéd their desire, 115
 The rays of heavenly love less brightly rise,
 And soar above with less of living fire.

But, sooth, a part of this our gladness lies
 In measuring our lot with our desert,
 Which seems nor less nor more unto our eyes. 120
 For God's high justice sheds into our heart

Such full and soften'd sweetness, that to aught
Of discontent our will can ne'er revert.

And divers voices make the sweetest note ;
Thus divers grades in this our light divine 125
Among these spheres with harmony are fraught.

Within this present pearl the light doth shine
Of Romeo, whose great and glorious meed
Was paid him with ingratitude malign.

But ill the envious Provençals speed, 130
Who 'gainst him work'd ; an evil walk, I ween,
Is his who mourns another's righteous deed.

Four daughters, and each one a crownëd queen,
Had Raymond Berenger ; this was the gain
Of Romeo, a pilgrim poor and mean. 135

But, moved thereto by words of evil strain,
He call'd this just man to account, who laid
Before him ever seven and five for ten.

Thus, poor and old, from thence he journeyëd ;
And if the world could know the heart he bore, 140
The while from day to day he begg'd his bread,
Much as they praise him now, they then had praised
him more."

CANTO VII.

Argument.

The Incarnation of the Word, the Immortality of the Soul,
and the Resurrection.

“ GOD of Sabaoth, glory unto thee,
Who with surpassing splendour dost o’ershine
The bright, blest spirits of the golden sea ! ”

Thus, moving ever to its strain divine,
This soul, on whom a double light was shed
Was manifest unto my mortal eyne ;

And with the others in its dance it sped,
Till, like swift sparks that from the anvil break,
By sudden distance it from me was hid.

I doubted, and within my mind I spake :
“ Speak, speak,” I said, “ unto that Dame who aye
With sweetest drops thine eager thirst doth slake.”

5

10

But yet the lowly reverence whereby
 I still am ruled, if but by *B* or *ice*,
 Me bent as one on whom deep sleep doth lie.

15

Short time I thus was left by Beatrice,
 Who, with a smile whose radiance well had made,
 In fiery pain man rich in blessedness,

Spake : "The true insight which on me is laid,
 Infallible, doth show thy wond'ring thought,
 How just revenge be justly punishëd.

But soon I will resolve thee of thy doubt :
 See that thou hearken to my words, for they
 With weighty import unto thee are fraught.

The man for whom there dawn'd no natal day,
 Because he suffer'd not the curb which still
 Doth profit, upon all his race did lay

Like condemnation : therefore sick and ill,
 In error, man for centuries made moan,
 Until the Word descended, to fulfil

The broken law. That Nature, which had gone
 So far from its great Maker, did he take,
 With act of his eternal love alone.

Now raise thy mind to that which here I speak :

20

25

30

This Nature, when united once again

35

Unto its Maker, was sincere and meek

As first created ; ere its own sad stain

Had cast it forth from Paradise, because

It left the way of truth and life. The pain

Imposed by the sharp sorrow of the cross,

40

If measured by the nature here assumed,

Was never yet endured for such just cause ;

And ne'er was any so unjustly doom'd,

If thou regardest Him on whom was laid

Such grief, in mortal nature. Thus, resumed

45

Within one act, are many things array'd :

The self-same death was pleasing unto God,

And to the Jews ; Earth trembled, as afraid,

And Heaven was open'd. This I now have show'd,

That it no longer should seem strange to thee,

50

Since a just pain just punishment hath sow'd.

But still thy mind I all entangled see

Within a knotted band, from thought to thought,

And fain from thence thou would'st thou wert set free.

Thou say'st : 'With clearness all thy words are fraught ;

But yet 'tis hid why God hath will'd it thus,

5

And our redemption in this manner wrought.'

My brother, this decree in the abyss
Of Light Divine is buried from all eyes,
Unlearnëd in the flame of love, I wis.

60

And since, indeed, this truth deep-hidden lies,
Which many gaze on, and but few discern,
Hear why such manner was most just and wise.

Lo ! God's great goodness, which doth ever spurn
All envy, self-enkindled hath reveal'd,
With glittering light, the loveliness etern.

65

That which, immediate, is from thence distill'd,
Is never-ending ; since the impress knows
No change, when its Creator once hath seal'd.

And all that from his hand, immediate, flows,
Is wholly free, for it abideth still
Exempt from novelty. The more it shows
Conformity unto its Maker's will,

70

The more it pleases him : the Holy Love,
Shining on all things, with most life doth fill

75

Aye its most perfect likeness. Man doth prove,
From all these things, advantage ; and if one
Fail, from his high estate he needs must move.

That which enslaveth him is sin alone,
 Which makes him all unlike the chiefest gain,
 Since little of its light on him hath shone : 80

Nor to his dignity he turns again,
 If all be not fulfill'd where guilt made void,
 And evil pleasure punish'd with just pain.

Your nature, when by sin it was destroy'd,
 In Adam fell from its primeval worth,
 As from the peace in Paradise enjoy'd. 85

Nor can it rise to where it had its birth,
 (If subtly thou gaze,) by any path,
 Save what by one of these two straits goes forth : 90

Or God alone of his free goodness hath
 Forgiven, or man himself should satisfy,
 For his mad sinfulness, the Heavenly wrath.

In the eternal counsels' depth, thine eye
 Now fix ; and listen with attentive mind,
 That thou the meaning of my words descry. 95

Man ne'er the means to satisfy may find,
 Because so low, in truth, he cannot bend,
 In meek obedience, as he first inclined,
 By disobedience, upward to ascend : 100

This is the reason why ye never may
Have power full satisfaction to extend.

And thus must God, in his most righteous way,
Man to the fulness of his life restore,
By one or both those paths, as, sooth, I say.

105

But, as the work is by the workman more
Beloved, the clearer it doth represent
The goodness of the heart which erst it bore;

Even thus God's bounty, which doth set its print
On all the world, by each and every way
To raise you to your first estate was bent.

110

Nor, 'twixt the latest night and the first day,
Was deed of such transcendent grandeur done,
Nor shall be evermore. A brighter ray
 Of glory shone when God gave up his Son,
That man might be sufficient to arise
Once more, than had he pardon'd him alone.

115

And all too scant the store that satisfies
Just vengeance, if the sinless Son of God
Had not been humbled in our earthly guise.

120

But that I may not here thy wish defraud,
This matter now more plainly I declare,

That thou must see it as to me 'tis show'd.

Thou say'st : ' I see the fire, I see the air,
And earth, and water, and the rest, endure
But little, nor corruption them doth spare ;

Yet all were made by the same Being pure :'
Thus, if within my words the truth doth stand,
They from corruption aye should be secure.

The angels, brother, and the blissful land
Wherein thou journeyest, indeed may claim
Wholly to be created by the hand

Of God. The elements thou here dost name,
And all the things which do from them proceed,
Only from power creative have their frame :

Created was the substance which they need ;
Created was the virtue ministrant
To them, within the stars which round them speed.

The soul of every brute and every plant,
By ray and motion of these holy fires,
A nature aptly influenced doth grant.

But Heavenly goodness human life inspires,
Immediate, and such love doth o'er it shed,
That it for evermore its source desires :

125

130

135

140

Thence, of your resurrection may be led 145
An argument, if thou bethink thee well
How erst our mortal frame was fashionëd,
When our First Parents came, in Paradise to dwell."

CANTO VIII.

Argument.

Ascent into the third heaven, that of Venus ; where dwell the souls of those who have lived on earth in friendship and sinless love.—Charles Martel, King of Hungary.

THE world believed, in her old perilous days,

That, turn'd in the third epicycle, aye

The beauteous Cypriote shed down her rays

On earthly love : and thus, with votive cry

And sacrifice, to her much honour brought

5

The ancient people, in their ancient lie.

Nor only unto her : but still they sought

To worship Cupid and Dionë ; one,

As mother, one, as son : and oft, they taught,

He sat in Dido's lap. Whence is begun

10

My song but now, this planet had its name,

Now poursuivant, now herald of the sun.

I know not how I soar'd unto that flame,
But I perceived it now did me enclose,
Since my fair Lady lovelier became.

15

And, as a fire the sparks within it shows,
And as in voices ye a voice discern,
When one is still, another comes and goes ;

Thus, lights within this light appear'd to burn,
And circled round with slow or swifter gleam,
I think, as they descried the truth etern.

20

And never winds from out the storm-clouds dim,
Or visible or not, so quickly run,
That they should not seem slow and dull to him

Who there had seen those lights divine speed on,
Leaving the circling motion of the sphere,
At first 'mid the high Seraphim begun.

25

And then those souls who foremost did appear
“Hosanna” sang, so sweetly that for aye
I long'd again its melody to hear.

30

And now, as one of them to us drew nigh,
“We wait thy bidding,” he began alone,
“And to thine every wish will make reply.
We 'mong the princes of each heavenly throne

Turn in one sphere and motion and desire 35

With those to whom thou saidst, in days now gone,

'Ye who do govern the third heavenly fire ;'

Such love is ours, that, for thy full content,

Rest shall be sweet from this our circling gyre."

After my glance I reverently had bent

Towards my Lady, and with answering gaze

Unto my wish she signified assent.

I turn'd again unto the light whose rays

So much had promisëd, and thus I snake :

"Ah! who art thou?" I said: and tenderness

10

Trembled within my voice. What gladness brake

Forth from its splendour in yet brighter glow.

As though my words did a new joyance wake !

He said : " I dwelt within the world below,

but little time : if it had longer been

On earth there were a lesser meed of woe

By thee my lineaments remain unseen :

For my glad radiance me from sight bereaves

as silkworm wound in its own web. I ween

Thou lov'dst me much: and sooth my hea-

Thou well hadst cause : for I had shown to thee

More of my love than the first early leaves,

If I had lived. The left bank, where ye see
The Rhone when it is mix'd with Sorga's flow,
Did wait me for its lord, when it should be

60

Due time : and where Ausonia's land doth show
Crotona, Bari, Gaeta ; and down,
Tronto and Verdë to the ocean go.

Already glitter'd on my brow the crown
Of all the land which mighty Danube bathes
After it from the Teuton shores hath gone.

65

And fair Trinacria, (whose smoky wreaths,
Between Pachinus and Pelorus' shore,
High o'er the gulf where Eurus fiercest breathes,

Not from Typhœus spring, but sulphur's store,) 70
Had waited still its sovereign lords, whom I
Should get, of Charles' and Rudolph's race, if sore
Oppression of an evil tyranny,

Aye fretting to the conquer'd, had not been
Cause that Palermo cried aloud : ' Die, die ! '

75

And, sooth, if this my brother had foreseen,
He from the Catalonian greed had fled,
Lest it should work sore evil. For, I ween,

It had been well if he or others made
 Such fit provision, that his bark no more
 Should bear, than safely might therein be laid. 80

His nature, which, from liberal sires of yore,
 Descended mean and vile, in sooth, had need
 Of ministers who sought no hoarded store."

" Since I believe the joy thy words do speed
 Deep in my inmost soul is seen by thee
 (Even as I see it) where each worthy deed
 Begins and terminates, it thus to me
 The more is pleasing : and this too is dear,
 That thou, beholding God, this thing dost see. 90

My heart thou hast made glad ; now vision clear
 Impart : because thy words a doubt do wake,
 How sweetest seed a bitter fruit may bear."

This I to him ; again to me he spake :
 " If I can show thee truth, to thy demand
 Thou'l turn thy face as now thou turn'st thy back. 95

The Highest Good, which all things in this land
 Wherein thou art doth govern and make blest,
 Gifts with the power of his all-guiding hand
 The influence of each sphere. Nor only rest 100

Existences in His all-perfect light,
 But these with their salvation are imprest
 Therein : thus whatsoe'er this dart would smite,
 Fitly ordain'd doth reach its proper end,
 As arrow from the bow sent forth aright. 105

Were it not so, the heaven where thou dost bend
 Thy steps, would do its work in such a wise
 That all its labours should in ruin blend.

This cannot be, unless the power where lies
 The motion of these several stars should fail, 110
 And fail the First who made them in such guise
 Imperfect. Wouldst thou I should now unveil
 Further this truth ? ” And thus I answer'd : “ Nay ;
 For well I see that Nature must prevail,
 Nor faint in needful work.” He spake : “ Then say, 115
 If it were worse that man should not be bound
 By civil ties ? ” Then I made answer : “ Yea ;
 Nor need I seek the cause.” “ If there be found
 No divers manners of your life below,
 Can it be thus ? No, sooth, if rightly sound 120
 Your ancient master's words.” His speech did flow,
 Deducing thus ; then ended : “ Here is shown

That from divergent roots your actions grow.

For one is born a Solon ; Xerxes one ;
 Another, a Melchisedec ; and some,
 Like him who lost in airy flight his son.

125

The nature of the spheres, which doth become
 A seal to mortal wax, does well its art ;
 But yet doth not distinguish what doth come

From one or other household. This doth part
 Esau in soul from Jacob : and so vile
 He who did to Quirinus life impart,

130

That Mars, as sire, is claim'd. By Nature's toil,
 The creature born were like to that which bore,
 If Providence no work had wrought, the while.

135

What once was hid, now plainly lies before
 Thine eyes : but yet to show I love thee well,
 Receive from me one corollary more.

Nature doth ever, if a discord dwell
 Within the lot it finds, like other seed
 Out of its proper region, wholly fail.

140

And if the world below, in very deed,
 Nature's foundations deep would lay to heart,
 Men would be good and wise. But ye, instead,

Turn to religion's work the man whose part
Were best to wear a sword ; the kingly crown
Ye give to one more skill'd in preaching's art :

And thus from the true path your footsteps far
have gone."

CANTO IX.

Argument.

Cunizza, sister of Ezzelino da Romano.—The Troubadour,
Foulques of Marseilles.

THEN, fair Clemenza, when thy Charles had freed
My mind from doubt, yet further did he show
The injuries in store for all his seed ;

But said : “ Be silent ; let the years still flow.”
I may but tell thee that just punishment 5
Shall come, as retribution for your woe.

The life within this holy light now bent
Its course unto the Sun, which all doth fill
With bliss, the Good which ever doth content.

Ah ! souls deceived, of most perverted will,
Who from such blessings turn your hearts away,
And fix them wholly on vain thoughts of ill ! 10

And lo ! to me another dazzling ray
 Approach'd, and all its gentle mind made known,
 By the fresh splendour that within it lay. 15

The eyes of Beatrice, which ever shone
 On me, now signified the dear assent
 Unto the wish to which my thought had grown.

I said : " Ah ! to my longing give content,
 Thou blessëd spirit ; prove that I in thee 20
 Reflect the thing whereon I am intent."

And then the light which still was new to me,
 From out the depth whence it at first did sing,
 Spake on, as one to whom all good things be

Well-pleasing : " Know, within that bordering 25
 Of guilty Italy, which wholly lies
 Between Rialto and each flowing spring

Of Brenta and Piava, there doth rise
 A lowly mount, from whence a firebrand came,
 Assaulting those around with sore surprise. 30

Its root and mine were, in good sooth, the same :
 Cunizza was I named ; and here I shine
 Because I yielded to this starry flame.

Yet gladly do I now myself resign

Unto this lot, nor for the cause I sigh ; 35

Which may seem marvellous to vulgar eyne.

But of this lustrous jewel of our sky,

Which nearest unto me doth shed its ray,

Great fame remain'd ; and, ere its glory die,

This hundredth year five times shall pass away : 40

See then how fit it is that man should well

Strive that of his first life some relic stay

Within the future ! And the mob who dwell

'Twixt Adigë and Tagliamento's flood

Think not of this, nor yet their deeds so fell 45

Repent, though sorely scourged : but soon with blood

The stream which bathes Vicenza's walls shall run,

Shed by the Paduans' most cruel brood.

Where Silis and Cagnano join, doth one

Go haughtily, with head uplifted high, 50

For whom the spider now her web hath spun.

Feltro shall mourn her pastor's treachery,

Than whom more wicked never yet did chance,

Within the prisons which in Marta lie.

Too wide and deep should be the vat, perchance, 55

Which might receive Ferrara's blood ; and they

Weary, who would endeavour, ounce by ounce,
The store supplied by this good priest to weigh,
Shed, his brave partisanship to prove : but all
Such gifts well suit that country's life. And yea ! 60

Above are mirrors, which ye Thrones do call,
From whence God's judgments shed their shining lore ;
Thus know we that this truly shall befall."

Here she was silent, and a semblance wore
As though her thoughts on other paths had gone ; 65
And then she join'd the circling dance once more.

The other joy, to me already shown,
Now glisten'd with a clear, resplendent light,
Like sunbeam on the rose-hued ruby-stone.

For gladness there, doth radiance glow more bright, 70
As here ye smile ; but in the world below,
The shades grow darker, in eternal night,

According to the measure of their woe.
"God seëth all ; and thou in Him," I said,
"So deep dost gaze, O blessëd one, that no 75

Desire from thy true insight can be hid.
Then wherefore doth thy voice, which with the song
Of those high Seraphs whose six wings do spread

Their cov'ring, charms the bright and starry throng,

Reply not to my wish ? If I in thee

80

Might gaze, as thou in me, sooth not so long

Thou here hadst waited." "Where the waters be

Spread in the amplest vale," his words began,

"Save only the great earth-encircling sea,

And, 'twixt discordant shores, against the sun

85

Extend till the meridian line doth stretch,

Where the horizon first ye look'd upon ;

There I was born, anear the salt sea-beach,

'Twixt Ebro's stream and Magra's, which, in short

And rapid course, doth as a bound'ry reach

90

'Tween Genoese and Tuscans. In like sort,

Doth the meridian of Buggea lie,

And the shore whence I came, and in whose port

Warm blood flow'd once in waves. And there, was I

Call'd Foulques by those who knew me and my name ; 95

And now my spirit shines within this sky,

As erst its light on me. No fiercer flame

In Belus' daughter glow'd (which sorely grieved

Creusa and Sichaeus) than o'ercame

Me in my youth ; nor in the maid deceived,

100

Whom Demophoon did with false love beguile,
 Near Rhodopë ; nor Hercules received
 Of Iolë. Yet here we do but smile,
 Not at the sin, which to our thought returns
 No more, but at the Power which rules, the while. 105

Here we behold the art which thus adorns
 Such works, and know the good which here doth lie ;
 Because each star the world below still turns.

But, that I now may wholly satisfy
 Thy wishes which are born within this sphere, 110
 Yet further I proceed in my reply.

Thou fain wouldst learn who in this light doth here
 Beside me sparkle with such radiance blest,
 Even like a sunbeam on a tranquil mere.

Know then that Rahab there doth calmly rest ; 115
 Thus she, conjoin'd with these our hierarchies,
 Her seal hath on the highest grade imprest.

Unto this realm (whereon the shadow lies
 Thrown by your earth) with Christ's triumphant reign,
 She before any other soul did rise. 120

'Tis well, in Heaven her light should never wane,
 But rest as palm of the high victory

Which once the Saviour's sacred hands did gain ;

Because she favour'd Joshua, when he
First glory won within the Holy Land,
Whereof the Pope hath little memory.

Thy city, which as plant of him doth stand,
Who first rebell'd against his Maker's power,
Whence come of envious deeds an evil band,

Produces and sends forth th' accursëd flower
Which hath the sheep and lambs so turn'd aside,
And made the pastor, like a wolf, devour.

For this, the Gospel and the Fathers 'bide
Neglected, and the Canon Laws alone
Are read, as by their margins is descried.

This by the Pope and Cardinals is known ;
Their thoughts do never seek the lowly home
In Nazareth, where Gabriel once hath flown.

But, for the Vatican, and where in Rome
The graveyards of St. Peter's hosts ye see,
Full soon the dawning of a day shall come
Which from adulterous power shall wholly set them
free."

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CANTO X.

Argument.

The Sun, the fourth heavenly sphere, where dwell the Teachers
of the Church.—Discourse of St. Thomas Aquinas.

GAZING upon his Son with love divine,
Breath'd forth by each from all eternity,
He who in light ineffable doth shine,
The Primal Being, far as ye may see
With eye or mind, made all things in such wise
That, looking on his works, it cannot be
Ye taste not of him. Reader, lift thine eyes
Unto the spheres with me, towards that part
Wherein one line across another lies ;
And there delight thee in the wondrous art
Of Him, who loves his work so well, that ne'er
From gazing on it doth his eye depart.

See how the oblique circle, which doth bear
The planets, bends from thence, to satisfy
The world which calleth for them. And if there

15

That pathway in a line uncurved did lie,
Much virtue were in vain within each star,
And almost every power of earth should die :

And if from the straight path they bent less far,
Or more, in much their influence must wane,
And greatly thus the mundane order mar.

20

Now, pray thee, reader, on thy seat remain,
And think of what to thee in part is shown,
If thou, ere weary, gladness wouldest obtain.

I point the pathway ; thou must go alone :
The matter upon which I now do write
Demands that all my care therein be thrown.

25

The greatest minister of Nature's light,
Which seals the earth with the great power of heaven,
And measures time by its resplendence bright,

30

With this same part conjoin'd, whereof I even
But now did speak, the spiral pathway went,
Wherein it earlier unto us is given.

And I was with it ; but of that ascent

I know not, saving as a man is 'ware
35
Of thought, ere yet it with his mind is blent.

Sooth, it was Beatrice who me did bear
From good to better, with such sudden flight,
It seemëd time had in the act no share.

With what a clear and self-apparent light
40
The souls who dwell within the Sun must shine,
Not seen by colour, but by radiance bright !

Though art, and skill, and genius all were mine,
I might not tell what Fancy ne'er can show ;
But yet may'st thou believe ; and with thy eyne
45

Long to behold it. And if all too low
Our fantasies, such wondrous height to scale,
It is not strange ; for never eye might go

Above the Sun. Within its orb doth dwell
The spirits, fourth among the armies blest,
Children of God, who aye contents them well,
50

And ever unto them makes manifest
The myst'ry of His Spirit and His Son.

“ Give thanks, give thanks, as it is meet and just ”
(Thus Beatrice once more to me began)
55
“ Unto the Sun of angels, who to this

Of sense hath raised thee by his grace alone."

No mortal heart was e'er so prompt, I wis,
To give itself devoutly unto Him,
With longing ardour and deep joyfulness,

As I, at these her words ; and now did seem
My love so wholly turn'd to God, that e'en
O'er Beatrice there fell oblivion dim :

Nor did it grieve her ; but the smiling sheen
Within her eyes, shed forth such radiant might,
That my united mind was soon, I ween,

Divided. Now full many a dazzling light
Made us their centre, and themselves a crown,
More sweet in voice than in their semblance bright,

And in victorious life before me shone ;
Even as Latona's daughter, when the air
Retains the thread whereof she weaves her zone.

The court of heaven from whence I come doth wear
Joys, which ye cannot paint beyond its shore,
Because they are so precious and so fair ;

Such was the song those radiant spirits bore :
He who his pinion spreads not for high flight,
This tale let him await for evermore,

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From silent lips. And then those planets bright,
Still ever singing, circled round us thrice,
As, near to the firm poles, each starry light.

They seem'd as maidens, who, in the device
Of some gay dance, do in their place remain,
And, silent, wait the music's new advice.

Then, within one of them these words were sain :
“ Lo ! since the ray of grace, which lights true love,
And, loving, ever doth increase again

Still multiplied, thus guides thy steps above,
And by its splendour leads to heights divine,
Whence none descend, save once again to prove

The upward path, he who denies the wine,
From out his phial, to thy thirst, is free
Only as water which doth aye incline

Downwards, yet may not flow unto the sea.
Now wouldst thou I this garland's flowers should tell,

Which circles round the fairest Dame, who thee
Of Heaven makes worthy. I on earth did dwell
Among the sheep whom Dominick doth lead,
The flock where he who strays not, fattens well.

He who on my right hand doth nearest speed,

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My brother and my master was ; and he
Is Albert of Cologne, and I, indeed,

Thomas Aquinas. But if thou wouldest be
Of others certified, now let thine eyes
Along the blessed garland heedfully

105

Follow my words. Yon other flame doth rise
From Gratian's smile, who did both forums aid
So well, that he gives joy in Paradise.

He who upon our choir such bloom doth shed,
That Peter was, who with the widow poor,
Within the Holy Church his treasure laid.

The fifth, who hath of light the fairest store,
Breathes with such love, that all the earth would fain
Know where his spirit dwells for evermore.

Within, is the deep mind which erst did gain
Such wondrous wisdom, that, if truth be true,
No second to such knowledge may attain.

Anear, behold the light which doth imbue
The soul of him who, in his flesh the while,
The life of angel-ministrants best knew.

115

And, in yon lesser radiance there doth smile
The Advocate of Christian times, from whom

120

Augustine drew the subject of his style.

Now, if from light to light thou wilt resume
Thy quest, in mind still following my praise, 125
With longing, to the eighth thou shalt have come.

Rejoicing in full insight, mid those rays
Dwells the pure soul who erst made manifest
To heedful ears, the world's fallacious ways.

The body whence it was so rudely cast,
Lies in Cieldauro : he from sorrow's path,
And exile, came unto this land of rest. 130

Yet further, look upon the burning breath
Of Isidore, of Bede, and Richard, he
Whose mind a more than human greatness hath. 135

Yon flame, from whence thy looks return to me,
Shines from a spirit who, in gravest thought,
Deem'd that the day of death came tardily.

It with the everlasting light is fraught
Of Sigier ; who, in the Street named of Straw,
Words true, but oft unpalatable, taught." 140

Then, as a clock which us the hour doth show,
What time the Bride of God doth rise to sing
Unto her Spouse, since love is all her law ;

And one part draws another, till they ring 145
Their tinkling chimes with such melodious sound,
That unto pious hearts deep love they bring :

Thus I beheld the glorious wheel go round,
And render voice for voice in sweetest lay,
So musical, the like may ne'er be found, 150
Save only in the land where gladness lasts for aye.

CANTO XI.

Argument.

St. Thomas Aquinas narrates the life of St. Francis d'Assisi.

O MORTAL cares insensate, what small worth,
In sooth, doth all those syllogisms fill,
Which make you stoop your pinions to the earth !

One follow'd Law ; one, the physician's skill ;
One sought for sacerdotal power ; and one
Would reign by sophistry, or deeds of ill ;

One robb'd ; one after merchandise did run ;
One wholly was to carnal pleasure given,
And one was plunged in idleness alone :

While I, who from all things of earth was shriven,
With Beatrice ascended up on high,
In glory welcomed in the courts of Heaven.

When all had turn'd again to where mine eye
 At first perceived them, they were stay'd aright,
 As candles in a candelabrum lie ;

15

And then I heard a voice within that light
 Which first had spoken, smiling speak once more,
 While more it glisten'd with resplendence bright :

“ As I receive my rays from the great store
 Of light eternal, in its mirror clear
 I see the thoughts which now thou broodest o'er.

20

Thou doubttest, and wouldest fain my words were here
 In speech of simple meaning plainly laid
 Before thee, as is meet for mortal ear ;

Where ‘ Well they fatten,’ I at first have said,
 And where I said, ‘ No second shall arise ’ :
 But here of subtle thought ye need the aid.

25

The Providence which in such wondrous guise
 Doth rule the world, in the abyss profound
 Of counsel hidden from created eyes,

30

That in the onward path of joy be found
 The Bride of Him who with a loud voice cried,
 What time his sacred blood gush'd from each wound ;
 And, that securely she with Him may 'bide,

Two Princes for her sake ordain'd aright,
Who should her footsteps guard on every side.

One was seraphic in love's burning might :
On earth the other, by his wisdom deep,
Shone as a splendour of cherubic light.

Of one I here will tell ; for thou may'st reap
The praise of both from what my speech now shows,
Since tow'rds one end their works the path did keep.

Between Tupino and the stream which flows
From blest Ubaldo's chosen hill, a bold
And fertile slope from the high mountain goes,

Whence aye Perugia feels the heat and cold
From Porta Solë ; and behind do weep
Gualdo and sad Nocera griefs which hold

Them in subjection. Where the mountain steep
Hath gentlest fall, on earth a Sun did break,
As this in light from Ganges' flood doth leap :

Thus let not him who of this place would speak
Call it Assisi, which were little worth ;
But Orient, if he true words would seek.

This light from dawning had not much gone forth,
Ere of his virtue the consoling power

Somewhat he 'gan to manifest on earth.

He with his father was, in youthful hour,

At war for one, to whom, as unto death,

None openeth the gate of pleasure's bower :

60

And he before his Pastor's court did with

This Lady wed, and in his father's sight ;

Then ever loved her with more steadfast faith.

She, widow'd, still had lived in lowly plight

A thousand and a hundred years, obscure ;

65

And none did her a second time invite,

Till this man came. Nor matter'd, that secure

With Amyclas she once was found, of old,

By him who made the Earth such fear endure :

Nor matter'd, though she was so firm and bold,

70

When Mary stood below, that she did rise

With Christ unto the Cross. Since I would fold

My meaning now less closely from thine eyes,

Francis and Poverty as lovers know,

For that which in my speech deep hidden lies.

75

Their concord, and the gladness which they show,

And love and marvel and sweet glances erst

Caused thoughts of holiness from thence to grow ;

And thus the venerable Bernard first,
Barefooted, ran to seek the fount of peace,
And, running, still seem'd tardy to his thirst.

O riches all unknown ! O truest ease !
Egidius and Sylvester to this strife
Did follow next ; so much the bride did please.

Even so this sire and master, with his wife,
Went on, and with that family who now
Had donn'd the girdle of a lowly life.

No weakness did his heart and courage bow,
Though he was Peter Bernardonë's son ;
Nor yet for the mean aspect on his brow.

But regally his purpose he made known
To Innocent, and thus by him was given
The earliest seal which his religion won.

When of the people many hearts were driven
To follow him whose wondrous life were best
Sung mid the glories of the courts of heaven,

Inspired divinely, then Honorius placed
Another crown upon the holy will
And longing of this archimandrite blest.

And when, from thirst of martyrdom, he still

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In presence of the haughty Sultan taught
Of Christ and those who all his words fulfil,

Because those heathens with fierce rage were fraught
Against the truth, and vain his labour stood,
Once more the fruit of Italy he sought : 105

And, 'twixt the Tiber and the Arno's flood,
Received upon the barren mount, by grace,
The latest seal of the most sacred blood,

Which in his limbs two years he did possess.
And then, when he who chose him would prepare 110
For him the meed he won in lowness,

Unto his flock, as to a rightful heir,
He did his well belovëd wife commend,
Bidding them, unto her, true love to wear ;

And from her lap would his pure soul ascend, 115
Turning once more unto its kingly realm,
Nor would on other bier his corpse extend.

Think now what he must be who at the helm
Of Peter's bark a worthy comrade stood,
And steer'd it straight when waves did nigh o'erwhelm ! 120

Such was our patriarch : thus he who would
Him follow in the order'd path may know

What precious freight he beareth through the flood.

But longing for new food his flock do go,
So greedily, they needs are scatter'd o'er
Too wide a pasture, straying to and fro ;

And aye the further wander they, and more
Self chosen ways are boldly following,
They ever have of milk a smaller store.

True, there are some who to their pastor cling,
In fear of evil ; but they are so few,
That for their cowls ye little cloth need bring.

Thus, if I speak in accents clear and true,
If now thine ear hath wholly been intent,
If that which I have said thy mind imbue,

In part thy wishes here shall be content ;
For on the shatter'd tree thy gaze shall dwell,
And know the meaning of this argument,

‘The flock where he who strays not fattens well.’ ”

CANTO XII.

Argument.

St. Bonaventura relates to Dante the life of St. Dominick.

As soon as that blest flame these words had said,
Thus ending his discourse, the holy throng
Round in its whirling measure swiftly sped ;

Nor once in circuit had it pass'd along,
Before another did its wreath enclose, 5
And follow'd, step for step, and song for song :

A song that doth so far excel each muse,
Each Syren of melodious voice, as light
Itself more clear than its reflection glows.

Even so, on a dim cloud do meet thy sight 10
Two arches parallel, of self-same hue,
When Juno doth command her maiden bright ;

As though the outer from the inner grew :
(Most like the words of that fair nymph of yore
Whom love consumed as sunbeams morning dew ;)

15

And thence the dwellers on this mortal shore
Trust to the compact God with Noah made,
That earth by ocean be o'erwhelm'd no more.

Thus round us sped those wreaths engarlanded
Of sempiternal roses ; on this wise
The outward to the inward answerëd.

20

Then when the dance, and the sweet harmonies
Of song, and all the splendour of the flame
Where light with light in fairer radiance vies,

Were still'd with one volition, in the same
Moment, as eyelids which, when will desires,
At once do shut and open : thus there came

25

From out the heart of one of these new fires
A voice that me towards itself did bear,
As needle to the polar star aspires.

30

Thus it began : "The love which makes me fair
Doth lead me of that other guide to tell,
Whose scholar did but now the praise declare
Of mine. Where one is treated of, 'tis well

The other's history to relate ; for both 35

Fought in one cause, and thus their fame should
dwell

Resplendent in like glory. When, in sooth,
The Saviour's hosts, which cost so dear once more
To arm, moved on with steps of tardy sloth,
The eternal Sovereign swiftly succour bore, 40
Not for their merit, but by grace alone,
Unto his armies in their peril sore ;

And to his Spouse gave aid, as I have shown,
By two, renown'd in word and deed, to whom
They might return who far astray had gone. 45

Within the land whence Zephyrus doth come,
And ope with gentle touch the soft green leaves,
That shed o'er Europe springtide's fresher bloom,

Anear the dashing of the ocean-waves,
Behind which, when the day most ling'ring dies, 50
The sun of its bright beam our sight bereaves,

The favour'd Callaroga doth arise,
'Neath the protection of the mighty shield,
Where ruling now, now ruled, the lion lies :

There was his birthplace who so well did wield 55

The weapons of the Christian faith and cause,
The holy athlete, all whose life reveal'd

Love to his flock, and strength against his foes ;
He who with living power was so replete,
That, yet unborn, his prophecies arose.

60

When at the sacred font they did complete
The sponsal rites 'twixt him and Holy Faith,
The troth-plight interchanged, as it is meet,

The lady who for him assent did breathe
Saw in a dream the wondrous fruit, which should
Come forth from him and from the heirs he hath.

65

And that his name be suited to his mood,
Inspired, his appellation did they take
From the possessive of what thus imbued

Him wholly : Dominick his name. I speak,
In sooth, as of the husbandman whom Christ
To aid him in his vineyard's toil did seek.

70

Well he appear'd familiar friend of Christ,
Since the first love in him made manifest
Was for the earliest counsel given by Christ.

75

His nurse oft found him, hush'd in wakeful rest,
On the bare ground, as though, ' For this I came,'

He plainly had in spoken words exprest.

O sire, thee Felix well befits as name !

O mother, thou art well Joanna hight, 80

If it may bear the meaning which they claim !

And not for gain, the which men, day and night,

With Thaddeus and the Ostian Cardinal,

Do seek, but since true manna did delight

Him wholly, soon was he most learn'd in all

Things good ; and 'gan to fence around the vine,

Whence, if neglected, soon the fruit doth fall.

And of the chair which once was more benign

To the poor righteous (and this not its sin,

But his who sits there, of corrupted line) 90

Not to give two or three for six, I ween,

Not for the first rich vacant benefice,

Not for the tithe which for God's poor had been,

He ask'd ; but, 'gainst the world all sunk in vice,

The licence to do battle for the seed

Whence sprang the blooming wreath whose number

twice

Twelve blossoms hath: and then, by word and
deed,

With apostolic sanction rush'd along,
E'en like a mountain torrent which doth speed
From its high source. He on the tangled throng 100
Of weeds heretical more fiercely smote,
The more they did resist his impulse strong.

And from that river divers streams were brought,
Whose waters through the Catholic vineyard steal,
So that its plants with fresher life are fraught. 105

If on this manner was one chariot wheel
Of those on which the Holy Church doth fight,
And in the field of civil war prevail,
Here should be manifest unto thy sight
That other's worth whose history was told 110
Now by Aquinas, ere I came, aright
Most courteously. The orbit which doth hold
The highest place in all its circuit, lies
Neglected. Where the wine-crust form'd, of old,
Is now but mouldiness. His flock now tries 115
To follow in his footsteps' track no more :
But, turning, walketh in opposing guise.

Soon shall be seen what this ill culture sore
Hath borne for harvest ; when the tare shall weep,

Because it is not garner'd in the store.

120

Most true it is, that he who searcheth deep
Within the pages of our volume shall
Find on some leaves, 'The old path still I keep ;'

But not of Acquasparta nor Casal :
Where some too strictly do this rule apply,
And some omit its precepts one and all.

Of Bonaventure, sooth, the life am I,
Of Bagnoregio ; who the lesser care
Did ever bend unto mine office high.

Illuminato and Augustine here
Shine, who among the first, with naked feet,
Girt with the friar's cord, to God drew near.

Pier Comestor here doth with us meet :
The Spaniard Peter, who twelve volumes wrote ;
And Hugo of St. Victor us doth greet.

The prophet Nathan with us hath his lot ;
And Anselm : that Donatus, too, from whom
Light fell on the first art ; and here is sought

The Metropolitan St. Chrysostom.
And Raban, Joachim the Calabrese,
To whom the gift of prophecy did come ;

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And many a paladin, to sound whose praise
I now am led by the bright courtesy
Of Fra Tommaso and his learnëd lays :
Thus hither have I come, with this good company.” 145

CANTO XIII.

Argument.

Two starry garlands of blessed spirits.—St. Thomas Aquinas
solves some of Dante's doubts.

LET him who well would understand my tale
Imagine, and the image still retain
(The while I speak) as rock that doth not fail,

Ten stars and five, which in the heavenly plain
From divers shores shine forth with light serene,
O'ercoming each dim cloud ; let him the Wain

Imagine, which in all its course is seen
Ever within our sky, both night and morn,
Nor e'en in turning hides its radiant sheen ;

Imagine then the mouth of the bright horn
That from the axle's central point doth rise,
Round which the primal sphere is onward borne :

5

10

And form therewith two signs within the skies,
Most like the garland Minos' daughter wore,
What time the frost of death had seal'd her eyes.

15

Let one within the other have its store
Of rays ; and both a whirling motion learn,
Which swifter one, and one more slowly bore :

Thus he some faintest shadow may discern
Of that true constellation's twofold dance,

20

Which round the spot where now I stood did turn.

Because so much its glory doth advance
Beyond our mortal thought, as Chiana's flow
Is duller than the sky of swiftest glance.

Not Io Bacche, Io Pæan, now,
They sang ; but to the Three in one divine
Nature, and Him who upon earth did show,

25

United, God and Man. The measured line
Of song and rhythmic circle now complete,
Those fires wherein a holy light did shine

30

Drew near, still glad in alternation sweet
Of work with work. And then the flame which spake
The wondrous tale of him who with bare feet
Went forth, the mendicant of God, thus brake

The silence : " Since well-trodden is the grain,
A fresher store love bringeth, for thy sake.

Thou deem'st that in the breast from whence was ta'en
The rib which form'd the beauteous face she wore
Whose palate caused the world such direful pain,

And in that other, which, deep-wounded sore
By the sharp spear, such ample ransom paid
For all our sin, both after and before,

The fullest measure e'er on mortal shed
Of light was given by the Great Power Divine,
Which wholly erst their being fashionëd :

Thus dost thou marvel at those words of mine,
There where I said no second soul might wear
Such wisdom as in yon fifth light doth shine.

Ope thou thine eyes to that which I declare ;
And here my speech and thy belief descry
Placed in the truth, as centre in the sphere.

For all that dies, and all that cannot die,
Is but a splendour of the idea erst
Brought forth by God in His great charity :

Because the living Radiance that doth burst
From out its source in such a wise that none

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May part it thence, nor from the Love which first
Existed, triune with the Sire and Son,
Its rays collects as in a mirror bright,
And through Eternity remaineth One, 60
Though in nine Substances shines forth its light :
And then from grade to grade doth downward go,
Till but contingent beings brief its might
Calls forth, at last. And these, thou shouldest know,
Are all things generated, which from seed, 65
Or without seed, do ever spring and grow,
Shaped by the rolling skies. In very deed,
That wax is all unlike the hand of him
Who fashions it ; and therefore do ye read,
Or more or less, the impress faint and dim. 70
Thus chances it the self-same kind of tree
Bears fruit, now good, now evil ; and ye come
Unto your mortal life with minds that be
Most diverse. If thine earthly wax did blend
All perfect with the skies supreme, thou'dst see 75
The impress of the seal most plainly stand :
But Nature works her work more faintly still,
Like skilful artist with a trembling hand.

Yet if therein doth glowing love instil
 The primal virtue where clear light hath smiled, 80
 Perfection then it truly doth fulfil.

Thus Earth by God's own influences mild
 Brought forth a perfect human form, of yore ;
 And thus the Maiden Mother was with child.

Therefore herein do I confirm thy lore ; 85
 For never, sooth, hath human nature been
 As in these twain, nor shall, for evermore.

Now if my words no further went, I ween,
 'How was this man so peerless ?' thou wouldest say ;
 But that by thee the truth may well be seen 90

Which erst was hidden from thy visual ray,
 Think who he was, and why such gifts he sought,
 When bid, for what he most desired, to pray.

I have not spoken so dimly but thy thought
 Might know he was the king who would be wise, 95
 Thus a sufficient king. He askēd not

The skill to count the spirits of the skies ;
 Or if from certain truth, join'd to a thing
 Which is but probable, there may arise
 A certainty ; nor if there be a spring 100

Of primal motion ; nor if e'er ye may
From the half-circle a triangle bring,

Without right angle. Note thou what I say ;
And regal prudence then shall well appear,
For that whereof I speak. Thy mental ray

105

Direct unto the word *Attain*, and there
Know my discourse did but to sovereigns reach ;
For they are many, and the good are rare.

With this distinction take thou then my speech ;
Which thus may hold with what thou dost believe

110

Of our first Sire, and of our Peace. And teach
Thy feet to move as lead their pace did grieve ;
And, like a weary man, with motion slow
Gain that whereto uncertainty doth cleave.

Because he 'mong the fools is placed most low,
Who without thought affirmeth or denies,
Whatever be the aim his speech doth show.

115

For the opinion that too quickly flies
Oft bendeth, turn'd aside to some false part,
And then self-love our better judgment ties.

120

Worse than in vain from shore he doth depart,
Because in sadder plight he must return,

Who angles for the truth and hath not art.

That ye on earth a proof of this may learn,
Melissus, Bryso, and Parmenides

125

Have err'd, unknowing whither they were borne.

Thus did Sabellius, Arius, and these,
The foolish who corrupt the scriptures pure,
And twist the straight to strange perversities.

Nor be ye in your judgments too secure,
Even as the man who all too hastily goes
To count the corn-blades ere they be mature.

For I have seen, throughout the wintry snows,
The thorn uplift its branches bare and waste,
And, after, bloom with blossoms of the rose !

135

And I have seen the ship that, straight and fast,
Hath plough'd the ocean in its order'd line,
Sink at the entrance of the port, at last.

Nor think Dame Bess and Master Martin's eyne,
Seeing one steal, another alms bestow,
May look within God's counsel-depths divine ;

140

Because this man may rise, and that may fall most
low."

CANTO XIV.

Argument.

The relative degrees of bliss before and after the resurrection.—

Dante ascends into Mars, the fifth heavenly sphere ; and there beholds a Cross of stars, form'd by the souls of those who have fought for the Faith.

FROM verge to centre, from the central spot
To verge, within a vase doth move the tide,
Struck from within or from without. This thought
Full swiftly now within my brain did glide,
When that most radiant light discoursed no more,
The soul of great Aquinas glorified.

Because his words the self-same likeness wore
As those of Beatrice, who thus did break
The silence : “Sooth, this mortal of thy lore
Hath need, although he nought thereof doth speak,” 10
With voice nor e'en within his heart ; yet he
Fain of another truth the root would seek.

Say, if the light, wherewith your spirits be
 Engarlanded, shall evermore remain
 As now it is, through all eternity. 15

And if so, how when ye once more regain
 Your bodies, visible as erst on earth,
 Shall this excess of splendour cause not pain ? "

Even as impell'd by yet more joyous mirth,
 The dancers oft pour forth upon the air 20
 A voice, while brighter gladness hath its birth ;

Thus, in response unto my eager prayer,
 Each holy circle yet more swiftly speeds,
 And in its wondrous song fresh joy doth wear.

He who lamenteth sore because he needs, 25
 Ere he can reach this higher life, must die,
 Knows not the showers which bless the heavenly meads.

That One and Twain and Three who lives for aye,
 And reigneth ever Three and Twain and One,
 Not circumscribed, but circumscribing high 30

And low, three times was by those spirits sung,
 With such sweet melody that thence might well
 For each good deed a fit reward have sprung.

And, in the fairest light, 'mong those who dwell

Within the lesser circle, did I hear
A voice as soft, perchance, as that which fell
From angel-lips, of old, on Mary's ear ;
And thus it spake : " As long as lasts the bliss
Of Paradise, so long shall radiate clear
Our love ; and wholly clothe us. And from this
Its glowing ardour comes our shining light,
Its ardour from the vision that, I wis,
Keeps measure with the gift of grace aright.
When with our bodies we are clothed again,
In full beatitude, their splendour bright,
Since more complete, shall be more grateful then :
For God's free gift of light shall still increase,
The light whence we to look on him attain ;
Thus clearer gleams the vision of our peace,
More holy ardour from its depths doth glow,
And fairer rays thence shine withouten cease.
But, as the coal, from whence the flames do grow,
Yet in its white and living light is more
In brightness, and its primal form doth show,
Thus shall this splendour which doth veil us o'er
Be vanquish'd by the form, whereon the earth

Still, to this day, lies heavy. And its store
 Of light can hurt us not ; since higher worth
 And strength our organs shall receive, for all
 The things whence gladness and delight have birth." 60

Then swiftly on my list'ning ear did fall
 The word "Amen" from both those glittering quires,
 As their dead bodies they would fain recall.

Perchance, not for themselves were their desires ;
 But for their fathers, friends, and mothers, dear 65
 Ere changed to sempiternal heavenly fires.

And lo ! around their radiant forms appear
 Splendours more dazzling than at first were seen,
 Most like the eastern sky at morning clear.

And as, when eve ariseth, a new sheen
 Doth here and there gleam forth from out the sky,
 And seems now true, now false ; even so, I ween,

Did I new spirit-substances desery,
 Moving in circuit round the starry wreath,
 In twofold glory glittering on high. 75

O true effulgence of the holy breath,
 How swiftly did thy white and glistening light
 Vanquish mine eyes, as yet untouch'd by death !

But Beatrice to me so fair and bright
 Appear'd, that, mid the wondrous heavenly throng, 80
 My memory may not follow her aright.

And when mine eyes were once again made strong
 To raise their lids, I saw myself upborne,
 With my fair Dame, to higher shores of song :

And well my upward path I might discern, 85
 E'en from the stars' more glowing smile, whose gleam
 Was redder than the hue it first had worn.

With all my heart, and with the words which stream
 The same from all, to God I thanks addrest,
 As did such new and wondrous grace beseem : 90

Nor wholly yet gone forth from out my breast
 The sacrificial ardour, ere I knew
 Accepted was my litany and blest.

For there, with dazzling glow of blood-red hue,
 A splendour gleam'd within with twofold ray ; 95
 I said : " O Helios, how dost thou renew

Thy glory ! " As the glistening Milky Way,
 Sprinkled with greater and with lesser light,
 From pole to pole doth in white radiance stray,

With doubt perplexing sages ; thus these bright 100

And constellated beams in Mars profound,
 The holy sign now form'd which doth unite
 The quadrants in the circle. Words do sound
 Here all too weak for memory ; for Christ
 Flash'd lightnings from that Cross : thus have I found 105
 Of this no image meet. Who follows Christ,
 Still taking up his Cross, may surely know
 How best to pardon me, beholding Christ,
 In glory, mid the white and dazzling glow.
 From side to side, from height to depth, a throng 110
 Of stars gleam fairer as they come and go :
 Even as, on earth, when the slant sunbeam's long
 Bright radiance parts the shadow (which with skill
 Ye seek as shelter from the ardour strong
 Of summer heat) with restless motion, still 115
 The atoms dance, in straight or devious path,
 And, changing ever, swift or slow fulfil
 Their ceaseless course. As the melodious breath
 Of harp or viol chimeth soft and dim,
 To one who knowing nought, yet listeneth, 120
 Sweet music fill'd my heart unto the brim,
 From the bright Cross, and bore me unto spheres

Of bliss ; yet understood I not the hymn.

Well I perceivëd, praises to mine ears
Were borne : “ *Arise and conquer,*” was the strain ; 125
I knew, as one who ignorantly hears.

So much its music all my heart did gain,
Until that hour no other thing was found
Of strength to bind me with so sweet a chain.

It well may be, my words too boldly sound,
As though I did those orbs but lightly prize,
Beholding which did all my longings bound ; 130

But he who seeth that, while I higher rise,
The seals of beauty glow with brighter hues,
And thither, here, I had not turn'd mine eyes, 135

May well excuse, where me I do accuse,
Myself excusing ; and my true words hear,
For highest bliss not yet this spot imbues :

But ever as ye soar doth shine more bright and clear.

CANTO XV.

Argument.

Cacciaguida narrates his history and praises the ancient customs of Florence.

THE will benign, that evermore is fraught
With dews of love which holy things respire
(As wicked hearts with every evil thought)

Now hush'd the music of this sweetest lyre,
And still'd each sacred chord whose harmonies 5
The strong right hand of Heaven doth touch with fire

How should those bright and blessèd Substances
Deny just pray'rs, when, that there might be born
In me desire to pray, their hymn did cease ?

'Tis well that in undying pain should mourn 10
He who, for love of things which may not 'dure
Eternally, this love doth hold in scorn.

As at the evening hour serene and pure,
A sudden flame oft flashes o'er the sky,
Startling the eyes that deem'd themselves secure, 15

And seems a planet which its place on high
Doth leave ; but from the spot whence it hath fled
No light is lost, and this doth quickly die :

Thus, from the point which tow'rd the right is stay'd,
Unto the foot of the bright Cross, a star 20
Of this fair constellation swiftly sped ;

And, passing through the radiant transverse bar,
The jewel fell not from its glittering chain,
But seem'd an alabaster lamp. Afar,

Even so, if true our mightiest Muse's strain, 25
Of old, Anchises' shade appear'd, when he
Perceived his son on the Elysian plain.

“O mine own blood ! what grace divine in thee
Abounds, that twice unto thy step the gate
Of heavenly blesSEDness unclosed shall be ?” 30

Thus spake this light : I on his words did wait ;
Then turn'd unto my Dame, whose glance did pile
On me fresh wonder in this mazëd strait ;

Because within her eyes there glow'd a smile

So sweet, I thought with mine the depths profound 35
 To reach, of bliss and Paradise, the while.

And then most lovely both in sight and sound
 The spirit added things which yet I might
 Not comprehend, so deep his speech was found.

Nor he from choice conceal'd his words aright ; 40
 But of necessity, because his thought
 For mortal mind soar'd in too high a flight.

And when the force with which his bow was fraught
 Had somewhat spent itself, and thus his speech
 More near unto our intellect was brought, 45

The words which first my weaker brain might reach
 Were : "Blessèd be thou, Holy Trine and One,
 Who to my seed such wondrous lore dost teach !"

And thus went on : "The long desire, my son,
 Drawn from the study of the Book of Might, 50
 Where of each word and blank there changeth none,

Thou hast fulfillèd now, within this light,
 From whence I speak to thee ; to her the meed
 Of praise, who plumed thee for so bold a flight.

Thou deemest that to me thy thought doth speed 55
 Through that which aye hath been ; as when ye know

The unit, thence do five and six proceed.

Thus ask'st thou not my name ; nor why I should
More joy to thee than others here profess,
Who with me in this gladsome throng do go. 60

Thou deem'st aright ; the greater and the less,
In this blest life, within the mirror gaze
Which, ere thou thinkest, doth thy thought express.

But that the sacred love, in whose bright rays
Wakeful I dwell, and which my soul doth fill
With sweetest longing, in yet ampler ways 65

Be satisfied, now speak thou forth thy will :
Speak forth thy heart's desire, secure and bold,
To which my answer is appointed still."

I turn'd to Beatrice, who did behold
My wish before I spake, and smiled to me
A glance which made my fancy's wing unfold 70

Yet wider. I began : "The love which ye
Possess, alike for each in weight doth show,
Before the First Divine Equality. 75

For, to the Sun whose light and heat do glow
Around you, all so equal seems your skill,
That scarce a fit comparison I know.

But in each mortal mind both power and will,
E'en for the cause to you most manifest,
In varying measure do their flight fulfil.

Whence I, a mortal, upon whom do rest
Unequal gifts, give thanks in heart alone,
For the paternal words to me address.

Thou living topaz, who, as precious stone,
Dost gem this fairest jewel, I entreat
That unto me thy name thou wouldest make known."

" O mine own leaf, whom erst to me 'twas sweet
But to expect, thy root thou here dost see :"
(This the reply which did my question greet ;

Then he went on :) " the man who gave to thee
Thy name, and who, a hundred years and more,
Round the first terrace toileth dolefully,

Was erst my son, and, in the days of yore,
Thy father's grandsire ; thus thy works may well
Aid him to shorten this his torment sore.

Florence, within thine ancient walls, whence fell,
And still doth fall, upon the listening ear,
The chime of tierce and nones, thy sons did dwell
In sober peace. Nor did thy dames appear

80

85

90

95

100

With diadems, and chains, and daintiness
 Of broider'd shoes ; nor girdles did they bear
 More beauteous than the wearers. Nor distress
 Arose at birth of daughters, lest their dowers
 Should be too scant, or fit occasion pass.

105

Then did no palace raise its lofty towers,
 All void and tenantless ; and none display'd
 The last Assyrian Monarch's evil powers.

Nor Monte Mario was thrown in shade
 By your Uccellatoio yet ; whose woe
 Shall conquer, as the pride anear it stay'd.

110

Then saw I Bellincionë Berti go,
 Girt with a leather girdle ; and his wife
 Come forth, and yet no painted visage show.

And Nerli and Il Vecchio's house, so rife
 With glory, went in homely garb content ;
 And, sooth, their dames were, in their simple life,
 On spindle and on distaff all intent.

115

O happy days ! when each one knew aright
 His certain place of sepulture ! None went
 To seek for gain in France ; nor, in his flight,
 His wife deserted. In each quiet home,

120

With baby-speech that parents doth delight,

One soothed her child ; and one the locks did comb
From off the distaff, singing, soft and low,
Of Troy, and of Fiesolë, and Rome. 125

Such wondrous thing, in sooth, it was to show
Cianghella then, or Lapo Salterel,
As Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.

Unto this pleasant life of which I tell,
This calm repose, this time of honest fame,
And homely truth, wherein 'twas sweet to dwell,
By Mary was I given, (with earnest claim
Invoked,) and in your ancient Baptistry,
Christian and Cacciaguida I became. 135

My brothers were Moront and Elisee :
My wife came forth from out the Vale of Po ;
From her was ta'en the surname borne by thee.

Then with the Emperor Conrad did I go ;
And he bestow'd on me the rank of knight :
Such praise he of my worthy deeds did show. 140

I follow'd him against the wicked might
Of that false law, whose people triumph o'er
(E'en for your Pastor's sin) your lawful right.

And there those misbelieving wretches bore
Me from the lying world, which doth not cease
Full many souls to wound with evil sore :

From martyrdom I came unto this land of peace."

CANTO XVI.

Argument.

Cacciaguida discourses concerning the noble families of Florence, and alludes to different events in its history.

O SMALL nobility of human birth,
If thou dost make men plume themselves on thee,
Below, where hearts are weak and little worth,
No thought of wonder thence shall rise in me ;
For in my soul some pride thereof did stray, 5
In Heaven, where never ill desire may be.

Sooth, thou'rt a mantle which, if day by day,
It hath not some addition, we discern
Time with his scissors clipping all away.

Then with the *you* that Romans first did learn, 10
And which but little now in Rome we hear,
Once more did I to my discourse return :

Whence Beatrice, who stood apart, with clear
Bright smile, appear'd like her who made the sign
At the first fault we read of Guinivere.

15

Thus I began my speech : " You, father mine,
You in my words much boldness do instil,
You bear me with you to such heights divine,

That I am more than I. Such bliss doth fill
My soul from many streams, that since I may
Receive it, all unshatter'd, do I still

Rejoice. My honour'd ancestor, then say
Who were your sires, and what the years that shone
Upon the gladness of your boyish day :

And tell me of the sheepfold of St. John,
Its amplitude, and who therein did go,
Most worthy of high praise." As, breathed upon

By a strong wind, the coal in flame doth glow,
Thus at my words I saw the heavenly light
Yet fairer in resplendent glory show.

25

20

30

And, as before mine eyes it grew more bright,
Thus with a voice of sweeter, softer power,
But not with modern speech, it spake aright :
" Since *Ave* first was said, until the hour

In which my mother, now a saint in Heaven,
Brought forth the heavy burden which she bore,

Five hundred, fifty times, and three, was given
This planet to the course it aye doth trace,
And glowing 'neath the Lion's feet was driven.

My sires and I were born within the place
Where first the sixth division doth appear,
Of those through which doth run your annual race.

This of my ancestors enough to hear ;
For who they were, and whence they came, it well
May be 'tis best unwhisper'd to thine ear.

All those who fit for bearing arms did dwell,
Then, 'twixt the Baptist and the God of War,
Were but a fifth of those whom now ye tell ;

But yet the citizens who mingled are,
With Campi and Certaldo and Figghine,
Even to the meanest, then, were pure. How far

'Twere better that ye had but neighbours been
To those I speak of, now ye well may think,
And at Gallutz and Trespian, I ween,

Your bound'ry stablish'd, than endure the stink
Of Aguglionë's boor within your wall,

35

40

45

50

55

And him of Signa, whose sharp eyes do wink

At all injustice. Sooth, if those who fall
Most from their first estate, to Cæsar's line
Were not a step-dame, deaf to loving call,

60

But as a mother to her son benign,
One, who in Florence now doth buy and sell,
Should hie to Semifontë, 'neath whose vine

His grandsire begg'd for alms. And still it well
Might be the Count should Montemurlo sway,

65

The Cerchi in Aconë yet might dwell,

In Valdigrevë Buondelmonte. Yea,
A mixture of the citizens hath been
Aye the beginning of the city's day

Of woe, as food unto our health, I ween.
The blinded bull doth yet more quickly die,

70

Than blinded lamb ; and many times 'tis seen

One sword strikes more than five. Cast thou thine
eye

On Urbisaglia's and on Luna's might,

How they have gone, and how like them do lie

75

Chiusi and Sinigaglia : thou aright
Shalt learn how families perish, and each fort

And city crumble slowly from its height.

All earthly things do sail unto the port
Of death, as ye yourselves : but some do hide 80
This fate, enduring long ; and life is short.

And as the moon with her unresting tide
Doth now conceal and now reveal the shore,
Even thus of Florence ebbs and flows the pride.

Therefore thou should'st not marvel at the lore 85
I tell of the great Florentines, whose fame
Is hid by Time since those old days of yore.

I saw the Ughi, Catellini's name,
Filippi, Grecci, Orman, Alberic,
How from their height to low estate they came. 90

Dell' Arca saw I, and Sannella eke,
In greatness equal to their lineage old,
With Soldanier, Ardinghi, and Bostic.

Above the gate which now, in sooth, doth hold
Guilt which so heavy on the bark hath lain, 95
That o'er it soon the billows shall have roll'd,

The Ravignani dwelt ; from whom a train
Came forth, Count Guido, and whoe'er the name
Of Bellincionë hath thereafter ta'en.

- Already Pressa well fulfill'd his claim 100
Of skill in governing ; and Galigaï
A gilded sword-hilt wore. Great was the fame,
Already, of the Ermine column high ;
Giuochi, Sifanti, and Barucci ; those
Who blush for the false measure now for aye ; 105
Sacchetti, Galli : and the plant, whence grows
Calfucci, flourished ; to the curule chair
Sizi and Arrigucci then arose.
How many saw I erst of those who were
Undone by pride ! And in each greatest deed 110
Of Florence flower'd, like golden blossoms fair,
The gilded balls. Even so, such lives did lead
The sires of those who, when your see doth stand
Unoccupied, grow fat the while they feed,
Deliberating. The presumptuous band, 115
Fierce chasing those who fly, and to the men
Who show their teeth or purse, most soft and bland,
And gentle as a lamb, arose e'en then ;
But from such low degree as put to shame
Hubert Donato, deeming it a stain
To be with them allied. Already came 120

The Caponsacchi from Fiesolë,
 To dwell within the Market-place : the name
 Of citizen was held, e'en at that day,
 By Jude and Infangato. Now I tell 125
 A thing incredible, but true ; the way

Within the lesser circle where ye dwell
 Was by a gate which had its name, of old,
 From him of Pera. Those to whom it fell
 To wear the blazon of the Baron bold, 130
 (Whose high renown e'en still ye celebrate
 When comes St. Thomas' festival,) do hold

From thence their privilege and knightly state ;
 Though with the people now he casts his lot,
 Who bears it bound with gold. Already great 135

Were Importuni then and Gualterot ;
 And in the Borgo, sooth, more peace were rife,
 If by new neighbours they were hinder'd not.

The house whence came your sorrow and your strife,
 From the just anger that your sons hath slain, 140
 And ended all the gladness of your life,

Then with its scions did much honour gain.
 O Buondelmontë ! to what evil sad

Thou from thy nuptials then didst flee amain,

By others' counsel ! Many had been glad
Who now do grieve, if unto Ema's stream,
When to the city first thy footsteps sped,

God had but granted thee : yet did it seem
That Florence owed unto the shatter'd stone
Which guards the bridge, a victim, in the gleam

Of her last peace. With these great spirits gone,
And such as these, fair Florence then I saw
In such repose that none did weep nor moan.

From these did she such grace and glory draw
Of righteous deeds, that, sooth, the lily-flower
Ne'er on its stem did then inverted grow ,
Nor wear a vermeil hue by fell Division's power."

145

150

155

CANTO XVII.

Argument.

Cacciaguida predicts to Dante his exile from Florence, and hospitable reception at the court of the Scaligers.

LIKE him who came to Clymenë, to hear
If true the tale which was against him told,
(And still this story makes a father wear
 Harsh semblance ofttimes to a son, too bold
In asking,) thus appear'd I to that lamp 5
Of sacred splendour, who with me to hold
 Discourse, erst changed within the glittering camp
Its site. My Dame thus spake : "Let thy desire
Be now shown forth, seal'd with the inward stamp.

Not that our knowledge need be wafted higher 10
By this thy speech ; but since ye aye must tell
Your thirst, ere ye attain to quench its fire."

"O plant from whence I spring, and who so well
 Hast raised thyself on high, that, as we see
 In the triangle there may never dwell

15

Of obtuse angles twain, even thus by thee
 Are seen, and in no vision faint and dim,
 The things which lie within Futurity ;

While thou dost gaze most fixedly on Him
 To whom all Time is Present : erst when led,
 By Virgil, through the land of anguish grim,

20

And upwards on the mountain where the Dead
 Are purified, some words that boded ill
 For all my future life to me were said.

Yet do I meet the strokes of sorrow still,
 With even front ; and ever am content
 To hear what shall for me be fortune's will :

25

The dart foreseen doth seem more slowly sent."
 This said I to the light which did begin
 First to discourse ; and as was the intent

30

Of Beatrice, I spake. Nor hid within
 Ambiguous meanings, which with many a wile,
 Ere yet the Lamb of God who bore our sin
 Was slain, the 'wilder'd people caught with guile,

But in clear words replied that love patern, 35

Veil'd, and reveal'd but by its proper smile :

“ Contingencies (which from the book diurn
Of your material world do not extend)

Are all depicted in the mind etern ;

Yet to necessity they do not bend, 40

Save as it seems unto the eyes that see

A ship which by the current doth descend.

Thence, as unto the ear sweet harmony

Doth come from organ pipes, on me is shed

The vision of the time prepar'd for thee. 45

As erst Hippolytus from Athens fled,

Chased by his vile and crafty step-dame's ire,

Even so from Florence shall thy course be sped.

Thus must it be, and thus do some desire ;

And soon their end shall be attain'd by those

Who scheme where Christ each day is sold for hire. 50

The blame of evil deeds still ever goes

Unto the injured ; yet shall vengeance bring

A witness to the truth from whence it flows.

Sooth, thou must leave each best belovëd thing ; 55

And this is the first arrow thou must bear,

Which from the bow of exile swift shall spring :

And thou must prove what bitter taste doth wear
The bread of others ; and how hard the path
To climb and to descend another's stair.

60

But that which yet a heavier sorrow hath,
Shall be the company of evil fame,
With whom thou in this vale shalt fall : for wrath

Ungrateful, mad, and impious, shall flame
In them against thee ; but a little while,
And they, not thou, shall blush thereat with shame.

65

In truth, their conduct soon shall show how vile
Their brutal nature ; which may quickly tell
'Twas best thou did'st not join them in their guile.

The place of refuge where thou first may'st dwell
Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy,
Who on the Ladder bears the Eagle well ;

70

And who shall have such tender care of thee,
That, 'twixt you, of the gift and the request,
The thing most often last the first shall be.

75

And with him thou shalt look on one, imprest
By this strong star, e'en from his hour of birth,
So deeply that his deeds shall ever rest

In storied fame. Men know not yet the worth
 Hid by his tender age ; for but nine years
 These orbs have round him in their path gone forth.

But ere the Gascon's crafty guile appears
 Against great Henry, shall some sparks be seen
 Of his high virtue ; which shall own no fears

Of danger, nor desire of gold. And e'en
 His foes the splendour of his high estate
 Shall own, and tell the fame thereof, I ween.

Him and his benefits do thou await,
 Since from his power full many a change shall spring ;
 Rich shall be poor, and lowly shall be great.

And bear thou writ within thy mind this thing,
 Of him, but tell it not :" and then he spake
 What e'en to him who look'd thereon might bring

Some doubts. He added : "Son, this must thou take
 As comment on what erst to thee was said ;
 Behold the guile which soon shall 'gainst thee wake.

Yet would I not that in thy heart be bred
 Envy against thy neighbours ; since much more
 Thy life shall last than till their doom is sped."

After that blissful soul's discourse was o'er,

So promptly given at first the woof to weave
Within the web which I towards him bore,

Thus I, as one who, doubting, would receive
Some counsel from a friend who all doth see,
And loves, and justly wills : “ Well I perceive,

My father, how Time onward spurs to me,
To strike a blow which ever most doth harm
Who most gives way to grief. Thus should I be
Heedful with foresight here myself to arm,
Lest, if I from my best-loved home must go,
My songs should lose all others with ill charm.

Down in the world of never ending woe,
And on the mount from whose bright summit far
My Lady's eyes the upward path did show,

And after, through the sky, from star to star,
Much have I learnt which, if I tell once more,
To many shall it seem as fruits which are

Most bitter : and if timidly the lore
Of truth I hide, I fear my name may die,
For those to whom our days shall be of yore.”

The light where that loved spirit smiled, whom I
Here found, flash'd forth, as in the sunlight clear

105

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120

A mirror all of gold ; then did reply :

“ Only the guilty conscience, which doth bear
The burden of its own or kinsmen’s shame, 125
The bitter sharpness of thy words shall fear.

Nathless, apart from speech of lying fame,
Let all thy vision be made manifest,
And let him wince who doth deserve the blame.

For if thy voice, in sooth, may some molest 130
At the first taste, yet vital nutriment
It well shall leave, when they that food digest.

Then let thy cry be as the wind, still sent
With strongest force the mountain-peak to smite :
This of thy honour is great argument. 135

And mid those spheres are shown to thee aright,
E’en on the mount, and in the vale of woe,
Those who of fame have gained the utmost height :

For, to the souls of those who hear thee, flow
Nor faith nor profit from such tales as bear 140
Their roots deep-hidden, and no sign do show ;
Nor yet for other precept whence no proofs appear.”

CANTO XVIII.

Argument.

Ascent into Jupiter, the heaven of sovereigns.—The spirits form letters of light, symbolising the justice of the Imperial sway.

REJOICING only in thought's inward power,
That blessed spirit paused ; and I did take
Like joy within me, temp'ring sweet with sour.

And she who led me unto God thus spake :
“To other musings pass, and think that I 5
Am near to Him who from all ill doth make
Us free.” Then did I turn right speedily,
To this dear sound of comfort ; yet to paint
The love within her eyes I may not try :

Not only since my speech is all too faint ; 10
But, sooth, the mind may not return again
So far, if by a higher power unbent.

But yet to tell so much I may attain,
 That, gazing upon her, no wish might be
 Within my heart which for aught else did strain.

15

While the eternal joy that, full and free,
 Beam'd forth on Beatrice, from her fair eyes
 Reflected, wholly gave content to me,

And vanquish'd me with the sweet light that lies
 Within a smile, she said : " Now turn and hear ;
 Not only on my brow is paradise."

20

As, pictured on the countenance, appear
 Emotions, if they wholly do inspire
 The spirit's depths; even so, within the clear
 Resplendent flashing of the holy fire,

25

To which I turn'd me now, I well perceived
 That somewhat yet to speak did it desire.

It said : " On this fifth grade of the fresh-leaved
 And mighty tree which from its crown hath life,
 And ever beareth fruit, nor is bereaved

30

Of foliage, are blest souls who in the strife
 Of Earth, before they rose unto the sky,
 Were mighty, so that every Muse was rife

With their great histories. Then fix thine eye

Upon the cross : he whom I now do name

35

Shall flash as fire that from the cloud doth fly."

And through the cross there flash'd a light'ning
flame,

At the word "Joshua" : nor yet by me

The speech was heard, ere deeds responsive came.

And, at the name of lofty Maccabee,

40

Another sped from out the starry train,

And gladness seemëd a sharp spur to be.

Thus, for Orlando and for Charlemagne,

Two I perceived, the while I gazed intent,

As eyes that for a soaring falcon strain.

45

On William and on Rinoard I bent

My glance ; and now unto mine eye was given

Duke Godfrey, with the Cross of splendour blent,

And Robert Guiscard. Then the soul, who even

Thus spake, now mingled with the starry band,

50

And show'd his skill in the sweet songs of Heaven.

Full swiftly did I turn to my right hand,

As deeming that my duty should appear

In Beatrice, by look or by command ;

And saw her shining orbs gleam forth so clear

55

And joyous, that the radiance of her glance
 Vanquish'd all former brightness which it here
 Had worn. As greater joy, it oft may chance,
 A man doth feel when he from day to day
 Perceiveth in good deeds he doth advance, 60

 Thus was I 'ware that on my heavenly way
 I sped in larger orbit ; while to me
 Was shown this wondrous being's brightest ray.

 And as, with transmutation swift, ye see
 A maiden's cheek resume its pallid hue, 65
 When from the weight of timid shame set free ;
 E'en such the change in Beatrice I knew,
 Caused by the whiteness and the temper'd beam
 Of the sixth star which to itself me drew.

 I saw within this torch of Jove the gleam 70
 Of love which dwelt therein, and to mine eye
 As written signs of this our speech did seem.

 And, as the birds, where fertile fields do lie,
 Arise in gladness from their food ; and now
 In circles, now in a long line they fly : 75

 Thus holy beings in this radiant glow
 Sang, while in lines of heavenly light array'd,

Now D, or I, or L, they seem'd to show.

First, to their music in the dance they sped ;
Next, when they one of those bright signs did trace, 80
A little while they silently were stay'd.

O Pegasean Goddess, by whose grace
The minds of men win long and glorious fame,
And by thine aid bestow it on each race

And city, give me light, that I proclaim
Their forms as I perceivëd them ; and shed
On these brief verses thy poetic flame.

Seven times quintupled show'd they, as they sped,
Vowels and consonants : I noted well
The course wherein, methought, that they were said. 90

And first those forms of radiance seem'd to spell
Justitiam diligite : they unfold
This sentence last, in splendour visible,
Qui judicatis terram. When was told
All, even to the last M, they stay'd, and Jove 95
A silver setting seem'd to lines of gold.

Then other lights I saw descend, above
The M ; and there they still'd themselves to sing,
Methinks, the Highest Good which them doth move.

As, when ye strike the burning brand, there spring 100
 Innumerable sparks ; whence unskill'd wights
 Are wont the dreams of augury to bring :

Even thus, meseem'd, there rose a thousand lights,
 And upward soar'd, some higher, some more low,
 As the Great Sun which kindled them invites. 105

Their airy flight did then no further go ;
 And I an eagle's head and neck beheld,
 Depicted brightly on the fiery glow.

The pencil which this painter's hand doth wield
 No guidance needs ; but ruleth all, and e'en 110
 The instinct that doth teach the bird to build.

Those Blessëd Ones, who first content had been
 To form a lily-crown above the M,
 With motion slight took their new form, I ween.

O sweetest star, how many a dazzling gem 115
 Show'd me that all our justice doth arise
 Within the heaven where shines thy diadem !

Therefore I pray the mind wherein there lies
 Thy primal motion and thy power, to glance
 Where the dark cloud is born, which from all eyes 120
 Doth hide thy rays. And thus again, perchance,

His wrath shall glow 'gainst them who buy and sell,
Within the temple built by martyrs once,

And signs portentous. O ye hosts who dwell
In this fair planet, pray for those afar
On earth, misled by ill example fell.

Erst with the sword were done the deeds of war ;
Now, by depriving souls, on every side,
Of bread which God from no man doth debar.

O thou who but to cancel, sooth, dost guide
Thy writing, think that Peter and that Paul,
Who for the vineyard which thou spoilest died,
Still live. Well may'st thou say : ' My heart doth
call

On him who did a lonely portion take,
And by a dance in martyrdom did fall ;
Thus Paul I know not, nor the Fisher of the Lake.' "

CANTO XIX.

Argument.

An eagle formed of many shining spirits discourses with Dante concerning the justice of God's judgments, and reproves the guilt of divers sovereigns of Christendom.

BEFORE me then appear'd, with wings outspread,
The lovely image which such deep delight
In sweet fruition o'er the spirits shed

Thus garlanded. Each seem'd a ruby bright,
Wherein the sunbeam burn'd so full and clear, 5
My visual orbs reflected it aright.

And that which from my lips ye now shall hear
No pen hath traced, no voice did ever speak,
Nor e'en to Fancy's dreams might it appear.

For now I heard from out the eagle's beak 10
A voice whose sound was ever *I* and *mine*,
While in the meaning *we* and *us* ye seek.

Thus it began : "Unto this height divine,
Which no desire may conquer, am I now
Exalted by my righteousness benign.

15

Erst did I leave my memory below
In such a wise that e'en the bad give praise
Thereto, but in my footsteps do not go."

As ye, when many torches fiercely blaze,
Feel but one heat, one sound alone did come
Of many loves from out that form's bright rays.

20

Thus I replied : "O flowers that ever bloom
In joy eternal, which do shed around
All your fresh odours in one sweet perfume,

Now, breathing, solve the eager wishes found
In me, whence long in hunger do I pine,
For which there is no food in earthly bound.

25

Well I perceive that if the light divine
Of justice is in other realms of heaven
Reflected, yet unveil'd it aye doth shine

30

In yours. Ye know that wholly I am given
To hear your words intently ; and ye know
The doubt with which so long my soul hath striven."

When from a falcon ye its hood do throw,

Joyous it beats its wings, its head doth raise,

35

And eager zeal doth in proud beauty show ;

Thus did this image, tissued of the praise

Of Grace Divine, and sang as spirits blest

Alone may know, who dwell in heavenly rays ;

Then answer'd : " He who doth his compass rest

40

On the world's verge, and thus in righteousness

Hath order'd all things, hid and manifest,

Could not his wondrous virtue so impress

On all the universe, that still his thought

Should not remain in infinite excess.

45

And this with greater certainty is fraught,

Since the first Proud One, on the loftiest height

Of all created beings, yet was brought

To sad untimely fall, because for light

He waited not ; and thus we plainly see

50

Each minor nature all too weak, aright

To grasp the good which lasts eternally,

And measures self with self. Our vision, lit

With somewhat of the rays of God which be

Shed over all things, still can ne'er be fit

55

Its early source so clearly to discern,

That this should seem no other than it yet

Most truly is. In Justice sempitern,
The gift of light which is on earth your share
Enters, as eyes which the deep sea would learn. 60

Though from the strand your gaze ye well may bear
Unto the wat'ry floor, it is unseen
In the wide ocean : nathless it is there ;

But hid by the great depth. Save the serene
Radiance which ne'er is dimm'd, there is no light ; 65
But cloud, and venom'd fleshly shade, I ween.

Now is the veil uplifted in thy sight,
Which closely erst the living Justice wore,
And hath so oft perplex'd thy mortal might.

Wherefore thou saidst : "A man upon the shore
Of Indus may be born ; where there is none
Who speaks, or reads, or writes, of Christian lore. 70

And all his thoughts and all his acts are done
So that, as far as human reason seeth,
Sinless in word and deed his days have run : 75

Yet unbaptized he dies, and without faith.
Where is the justice which condemns this man ?
If he believes not, where the guilt of death ?'

But who art thou, who fain wouldest sit and scan,
 E'en from afar, a thousand miles and more, 80
 When yet thy vision reaches not a span ?

Truly, to him who cons this subtle lore,
 If here ye had not Scripture for a guide,
 Of doubts there would be, sooth, an ample store.

O earthly animals, minds gross with pride ! 85
 The Primal Will, which in itself is good,
 From its own purity ne'er turns aside.

So much is just, as with that Will hath stood
 In consonance : and no created thing
 Attracts it ; but its radiance hath imbued 90

All beings.” As the stork upon the wing
 Flutters above her nest, when she hath brought
 Food to her young, whose eyes, still following

The mother, gaze again ; even thus I sought
 The heavenly image, who, meseem'd, did fly 95
 On pinions moved by many-minded thought.

And, circling round, it sang ; and this its cry :
 “ As are my notes to thee, who dost but hear,
 Uncomprehending, so to mortal eye
 Are the eternal judgments.” Then those clear 100

Flames, by the Holy Spirit lit, remain
 Stay'd in the sign by which all Earth did fear
 The Roman name ; and said : " Unto this reign
 None ever rose, who yet believed not Christ,
 Before or since He on the Cross was slain.

105

But, sooth, 'tis true that many call on Christ,
 Who shall be less, at the last Judgment Day,
 To him, than some who ne'er have heard of Christ.

The Ethiop on such Christians guilt shall lay,
 When the two bands, apart, receive their meed ;
 One in eternal joy, one lost for aye.

What can the Persians say, in very deed,
 Unto your kings, when they the open book
 See, where their every evil act they read ?

There, 'mong the works of Albert ye may look
 For that which soon the pen shall write, whereby
 Prague shall be lone, as one whom all forsook ;

And, there, the grief that on the Seine doth lie,
 Caused by the money falsified by one
 Who in the chase of a wild boar shall die ;

115

And, there, the pride whence thirsteth every son
 Of England and of Scotland for the strife,

120

Till in his proper bounds remaineth none ;

The Spaniard with soft luxury so rife,

And him who wears Bohemia's diadem,

125

Who never knew nor loved a virtuous life ;

And there the Cripple of Jerusalem

His every virtue with an I hath sign'd,

While his ill deeds are written with an M.

There ye the avarice and guilt shall find

130

Of him who keepeth still the Isle of Fire,

Where erst Anchises his long life resign'd.

To show what vileness doth in him respire,

His deeds are writ in letters curt, which note

Much in small space. The brother of his sire,

135

And his own brother, shall show actions fraught

With filthiness ; whence bitter scorn shall fall

Upon two crowns, to foul dishonour brought,

And on a noble race. Of Portugal

And Norway shall the sovereigns' guilt be seen ;

140

And his who in Ragusa ruled, and all

So evilly Venetian coin, I ween,

Adjusted. Thou, O Hungary, wert blest,

If now no more misgovern'd thou hadst been :

And thou, Navarre, in quietness mightst rest,
If thou wouldest arm thee with thy mountain shield.
But be ye with this certain truth imprest,
That, earnest of what soon shall be fulfill'd,
Now Famagosta and Nicosia weep
Sore for the beast that doth their sceptre wield,
And near its fellows' side doth closely ever keep."

CANTO XX.

Argument.

The eagle's eye, formed of good and just princes.—The legend
of Trajan ; and of Ripheus of Troy.

WHEN he who from the world doth chase all gloom
Descendeth from our hemisphere, and day
On every side doth its own light consume,

The sky, first lit but with the sunny ray,
In swiftest changing sparkles forth once more, 5
With many lamps, in all whose bright array
One only splendour glows. This thought came o'er
My mind, as now the speech was stay'd of this,
The ensign of the world, which erst they bore

Who sway'd it ; for each living light in bliss, 10
Yet shining more and more, began, the while,
A song too sweet for memory, I wis.

O gentlest Love, aye mantled in a smile,
How ardent wert thou in those radiant lyres,
Which never thought unholy may beguile !

15

After the fair and precious gems, whose fires
O'er the sixth planet shed their jewell'd gleam,
Had hush'd to silence the angelic quires,

I seem'd to hear the murmur of a stream,
Still clearly flowing down from stone to stone,
Whence of its plenteous source ye well might deem.

20

As sound doth at the cithern's throat alone
Its form receive ; and from the flute do flow
Sweet notes, when through its pipe the breath hath
blown,

The eagle's whisper'd melody even so
Up from the throat gush'd out upon mine ear,
Nor tarried in its song, nor linger'd slow.

25

There had it voice, and thence I well might hear
Forth from its beak the accents which my heart
Awaited, to indite them full and clear.

30

And on this manner it began : "The part
Which doth in mortal eagles bear to see
The sun, unshrinking, if intent thou art

Thereon, thou here mayst look upon in me ;
 Because, of all the splendours which do trace
 My form, those fires of highest order be

Whence gleams my visual orb. He who the space
 Doth fill in midst, with radiance pure and strong,
 Erst bore the Ark of God from place to place,

The Minstrel of the Holy Spirit's song :
 He knoweth now the merit of his strain,
 (Far as its counsel did to him belong)

By its reward, which is such wondrous gain.
 And of the five who circle round him, he
 Who cheer'd the widow when her son was slain

Is lowest : now, the cost he well doth see
 Of losing Christ ; from the experience
 Of this sweet life, and that which aye must be

Opposed to it. In the circumference,
 He who is nearest, in the arch supern,
 Delay'd his death by truest penitence :

Now, he perceives how God's decrees etern
 Are all unchanging ; although worthy prayer
 Until the morrow some delay may earn.

The next afar the Empire erst did bear,

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With good intention which had evil fruit,
And became Greek, that he his place might spare
Unto the Pastor : now, he knows the suit
Of ill, which from his virtuous deed may be,
Doth hurt him not, although from out that root

60

Earth is destroy'd. The next whom here ye see
Is William, whom the land doth still deplore
That weeps for Charles and Fred'rick bitterly,

Who still do live. He, on the heavenly shore,
How well they love a righteous king doth know ;
And shows it forth with his rich splendour's store.

65

The wand'rer still upon the earth below
Scarce deems that Ripheus of Troy doth here,
The fifth within this holy circle, glow :

Now knoweth he full well what, in your sphere,
Is of the grace divine perceivëd not ;
Though to his vision all may not appear."

70

Even as a lark which in the air doth float,
First singing, then in silence is content
With the last joy wherewith her song is fraught ;

75

Thus seem'd to me the lovely image, blent
Of the Eternal Blessëdness, whereby

Each thing was form'd as in His will was meant.

And though the doubts within my soul did lie
As if through clearest glass they had been seen,
Yet brook'd I no delay for their reply ;

But from my lips : “What things are these ?” I
ween,

Burst forth as with its proper weight ; and lo !

It seem'd as though a fairer joy had been,

Amid those flashing lights. With richer glow
In its bright eye, the blesSED Sign replied,
That I no longer in suspense might go :

“I see that though in faith thou dost abide
Of what I speak, thou knowest not this thing ;
Which thus, although believed, is undescried.

Thou dost as one who learns, still following
Somewhat by name, but yet its essence ne'er
Perceives, till ye some friendly guidance bring.

The heavenly kingdom violence doth bear
Of burning love and living hope, which aye
Conquers the Will Divine : nor doth it wear

Such guise as when a man would vict'ry try ;
But yields, because it gladly would be sway'd,

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And, conquer'd, conquers with benignity.

Thou from the first star and the fifth, array'd
Beneath my brow, much wonder dost receive,
Since they among the angel-band are stay'd.

They came not forth, as thou dost still believe,
From out their bodies, in dark heathen gloom,
But plainly did the feet of Christ perceive,

This in the past, and that in days to come.
Thus one from Hell, where never they return
To holy will, unseal'd once more the tomb :

And this reward a living hope did earn ;
A living hope, which put strong faith in prayer,
To raise him once again, that he might learn

Freely to do God's will. And thus his fair
And lofty soul return'd again to Earth,
A little while, and strong belief did bear

In one, of power to aid him : then had birth
In him such love, that when his second grave
Received him, unto bliss his soul went forth.

The other, by the grace which aye doth save,
Distilling from so deep a fount, that none
Hath ever look'd upon its earliest wave,

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On earth his deeds so righteously had done,
 That God, from grace to grace, to him did ope
 The tale of our redemption by his Son,

In days to come. Then, in this certain hope,
 Did he believe : and plainly did he see
 The filth of pagan lies ; for whose ill scope

A perverse race he blamed. Those Maidens three,
 Whom thou didst see at the right wheel, were fraught,
 For him, with grace which laves baptismally,

A thousand years ere baptism. How remote,
 Predestination, art thou from the eye
 Which of thine earliest cause perceiveth nought !

Beware, ye mortals, who so fain would try
 Your skill in judgment ; we who look on God,
 Yet may not wholly his elect desery.

But this is sweet to us ; and grace we laud,
 Since in this good we reach perfection's line :
 Our will and God's do hold the self-same road."

Thus unto me this starry form divine
 Gave sweetest medicine, that the holy rays
 Might clearly be perceived by my weak eyne.

As to a lovely song the hand that plays

125

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135

140

The lute, still vibrates the melodious chord,
And thus yet sweeter are the vocal lays ;

So, while this image spake (do I record
In memory) those blissful lights I saw,
Like flashing of an eye, at the same word
Gleam brighter, as if moved by one harmonious law.

CANTO XXI.

Argument.

Saturn, the seventh heavenly sphere, where dwell the contemplative saints.—Mystic ladder.—St. Peter Damian.

ALREADY now my gaze was bent once more
Towards my Dame, and with it all my heart,
Most wholly turn'd from every other lore.

And yet she did not smile ; but said : “ Thou wert
As Semelë, what time by the fierce might 5
Of splendour burnt, if I did here impart

My smiles. Because my beauty, at each height
Of the eternal palace which we scale,
As thou hast seen, doth ever shine more bright ;

And thus must o'er thine earthly strength prevail, 10
In radiance all too pure for mortal eyes,
And thou, as thunderstricken leaves, shouldst fail.

We to the seventh far splendour now arise,
Whose rays beneath the Lion's breast are shed
Down upon earth, in fierce and fervent guise.

15

Here let thy mind be with thy vision led ;
And form thereof a mirror to the thing
Which mirror'd here before thine eyes is spread."

He who might know the sweetness of the spring
Of joy in gazing on her aspect blest,

20

When I to other cares my thoughts did bring,
Should see how deep was rooted in my breast
Obedience to my heavenly escort fair,
And weigh the gladness that in each did rest.

Within the crystal which the name doth wear,
Encircling Earth, of its good King, of old,
Beneath whom none did hate nor malice bear,

25

I saw a ladder, seeming all of gold
Whereon the sun doth shine ; and my weak gaze
To follow its far height might not be bold.

30

Then saw I by the steps descend such rays
Of splendour, that, meseem'd, each heavenly fire
Was there diffusëd in their glittering maze.

As rooks, whom Nature's teaching doth inspire,

Together move at dawning of the morn, 35

Some heat in their chill'd plumage to acquire ;

And some then flee away without return,

And some wheel round again from whence they came,

And others circle, on their wings upborne ;

Even thus, methought, the motion was the same 40

Of all those scintillating lights, which here,

Touching this stair, shine forth with brighter flame.

And one who nearest linger'd shone so clear,

That to myself I spake, in inward thought :

“The love thou show’st me plainly doth appear.” 45

But she whose guidance I had ever sought,

For time and guise of silence and of speech,

Now stay’d ; yet, as was meet, I utter’d nought,

Though much I long’d to speak. Then she, who each

Desire perceived through Him who seëth all, 50

Thus spake : “ Thy fervent wish its scope may reach.”

And I began : “ So low my merits fall,

That I am most unworthy thy reply ;

Yet, for her sake who grants me leave to call

Thus for thine answer, thou who hid dost lie 55

Within thy gladness, speak, that I may hear

The cause for which to me thou draw'st so nigh,

And wherefore now are silent in this sphere
All the sweet symphonies of Paradise,
Heard elsewhere in melodious voices clear."

"Because thine ears are mortal, as thine eyes,"
He answer'd, "here they sing not ; for the same
Cause which hath stay'd the smile of Beatrice.

Down by the holy stair so far I came,
Only to bear to thee a greeting blest,
With speech and with my mantle of pure flame.

Nor, sooth, a greater love is thus exprest ;
For love, as much and more, above doth glow
As in its burning rays is manifest.

But the great charity which makes us go,
Serving the Power who rules with his high might
The world, elected me this thing to show."

"Well do I see," I said, "O sacred light,
How freely love doth in this court suffice
To do the holy will of God aright ;

But this is undiscernëd by mine eyes,
Wherefore thou wert predestinate alone,
Unto this office, mid thy companies."

My speech not yet to the last word had gone,
 When round its centre I that flame descried
 Circling, as in the mill the whirling stone.

80

And then the love which was within replied :
 " A fire divine its light on me doth stay,
 Transpiercing that wherein my life doth 'bide ;

Which virtue, join'd unto my visual ray,
 Above myself doth bear me ; whence I see
 The Highest Essence, where its fountain lay.

85

Thence comes the gladness ye behold in me ;
 Because unto my vision bright and clear
 The flame which clothes me similar must be.

90

The spirit highest in the heavenly sphere,
 The seraph nearest unto God's own rays,
 Yet could not bring to thee an answer here.

The thing which doth thy tangled thought amaze
 Far in the deep abyss hath had its birth,
 Cut off for ever from created gaze.

95

When thou returnest to the mortal earth,
 This lesson bear with thee ; that none presume
 Upon this path his footsteps to send forth.

The mind, here light, on earth doth dwell in gloom ; 100

How then the knowledge can ye reach below,
Which yet ye cannot, when to Heaven ye come ? ”

So deeply to my heart his words did go,
I left this question ; and, in meekest guise,
Begg'd that he now his name to me would show.

105

“ Between two shores of Italy, arise
Mountains not distant from thy native land,
So high that lower the loud thunder lies.

A height is there, named Catria : a band
Beneath it aye abide in cloister'd shade,
Which but for holy worship still should stand.”

His third discourse he thus began ; then said,
Continuing his speech : “ I there so well
In all God's service was establish'd,

That, but with food oil-season'd, in my cell
Joyful I lived throughout both heat and cold,
Content in thoughts contemplative to dwell.

That convent, wont to give, in days of old,
Fruit amply to these heavens, hath now a store
So vain, its evil deeds must soon be told.

There Peter Damian was the name I bore :
Pier the Sinner dwelt in cloisters vow'd

115

120

Unto our Lady on the Adrian shore.

Short was the span of life to me allow'd,

When I was call'd the dignity to wear

125

Which, since, from bad to worse hath ever flow'd.

Once Cephas came, and he who erst did bear

The Holy Spirit's sword, all poor and lean,

And barefoot, living upon lowly fare.

But modern pastors come with haughty mien,

130

And must have some to lead them, since so great

Their bulk, and some to bear their train, I ween.

And with their mantles they, in princely state,

Their palfreys cover ; so that there do go

Two beasts beneath one skin : how long doth wait

135

Long-suff'ring patience ! " At this voice, I saw,

From grade to grade descend full many a flame,

Then circle round, and still more beauty draw

From every motion. As they nearer came,

They stay'd, with a loud cry ; on earth is found

140

Nought which resemblance thereunto may claim :

I understood it not, sore-vanquish'd by its sound.

CANTO XXII.

Argument.

Discourse with St. Benedict.—Ascent into Gemini.

HEAVY with much amazement, to my guide
I turn'd me, even as doth a child afraid,
Who flees where he may evermore confide.

She, like a mother swiftly bringing aid
Unto her trembling babe by terror driven,
With soothing voice to me thus answerëd :

“Dost thou not know that thou art now in Heaven ?
And know’st thou not that Heaven is wholly pure,
And all its deeds to sacred zeal are given ?

How could’st thou these celestial songs endure,
Or e’en the light that in my smile doth lie,
If now this voice thy spirit doth obscure ?

In which, if thou hadst understood its cry,
A prayer for vengeance soundeth full and clear,
Which yet thou shalt behold, before thou die.

15

That sword smites not in haste, nor doth appear
Too slowly ; save, perchance, unto the thought
Which of its coming hath desire or fear.

But let thy mind with other things be fraught ;
For many a spirit of illustrious fame
Thou'l see, if hereunto thy gaze be brought."

20

Even as her bidding, was mine act the same ;
And I beheld a hundred globes of fire,
And each the fairer for reflected flame.

I stood, as one repressing his desire
Of knowledge, who his eager will doth curb,
Fearing that he too boldly may aspire.

25

And then the largest and the loveliest orb
Of all those pearls toward me swiftly prest,
To grant the wish that did my soul absorb ;

30

And now I heard : " If thou thy gaze could'st rest,
As mine, upon the love which aye doth glow
In us, thy wish full soon were manifest.

But that too long it seem not till thou know

The thing whereof thou doubtst, I reply
E'en to the inward thought thou dost not show.

The mountain where Cassino now doth lie
Was erst frequented, on its furthest height,
By men deceived in false belief. And I

Am he who on that hill first preach'd aright
The name of Him, who unto Earth brought down
The truth which bears us upward in high flight.

And upon me such grace reflected shone,
That from the worship of the evil Powers
Who Earth seduced, I drew each neighb'ring town.

These other fires all loved to pass their hours
In contemplation, lit by that warm glow
Which giveth birth to holy fruit and flowers.

Macarius here and Romaldo go :
Here are my brothers who in cloister'd cell 50
Their footsteps stay'd, and their strong hearts did
show."

And I to him : "The love thy words so well
Set forth, and the fair aspect that I see
And note, which doth in all your radiance dwell,
Hath so my faith dilated, that to me

It is as when the sun doth shed his rays
 Upon a rose full blown. And now I thee
 Entreat to tell me if in the pure ways
 Of grace I may advance so far, that I
 On thy unveiled countenance may gaze."

60

Whence he : "My brother, all thy longings high
 Shall be fulfill'd in the last sphere, I ween,
 Which mine and every wish doth satisfy.

There every aspiration shall be seen,
 Entire, mature, and perfect ; there alone
 Is all where it for evermore hath been.

65

Because in space it dwells not, nor hath known
 The polar motion ; and our staircase high
 Doth reach it, thus above thy gaze hath flown.

Up to yon height the patriarch Jacob's eye
 Beheld its summit rise, when in his dream
 He saw God's angels come and go thereby.

70

But, now, to climb this ladder none doth deem
 That he his steps should move ; and thus my rule
 On Earth doth but a blotted parchment seem.

75

My cells are now a robber-cave : the cowl
 And cloak erst worn by holy men of yore,

Sooth, are but sacks that of ill flour are full.

Not usury unmeasured grieves so sore
The heart of God, as doth the wealth which aye 80
Corrupts the monk with its most evil store.

Because the riches which the Church lays by
Should be for those who ask for God's dear sake,
Not for relations, or less pure a tie.

But oft the flesh of mortals is so weak,
That good beginnings fail ; nor is unroll'd
The acorn from the oak. All pure and meek,

St. Peter first began withouten gold
Or silver : I, with fasting and with prayer ;
And Francis humbly in his convent-fold. 90

If thou dost on each fountain look, and where
Its after course doth rush in downward way,
Ye shall behold all dark which erst was fair.

But yet, a harder thing it was to lay
Commands on Jordan to flow back, when thus 95
By God 'twas will'd, and ocean waves to stay,
In wondrous guise, than to bring aid to us."
He spake ; and to his band he turn'd once more,
That band now filling smaller space, I wis ;

Then, like a whirlwind, all on high did soar ; 100
 The while my gentle Lady, with a sign
 Alone, by that steep stair me upwards bore.

So did she conquer by her power benign,
 That never when ye mount and then descend,
 On Earth, could motion be as swift as mine. 105

Reader, as I again would gladly wend
 To that high realm, for which my sins I weep
 So oft, and smite my breast, thou couldst not lend
 Thy finger to the burning flames which leap,
 So quickly as I now beheld the Sign 110
 Which in the steps of Taurus aye doth keep,
 And enter'd it. O glorious star divine,
 O light with virtue fill'd, from whence I bear
 All that in gift of Genius may be mine,

He who each mortal life doth still prepare,
 With thee was born, and sank to rest with thee,
 When first I breath'd the sweet Tuscan air ;
 And, after, when such grace was given to me,
 And I arose to thy pure sphere of fire,
 Awhile my dwelling thou wert chosen to be : 120
 To thee devoutly doth my soul aspire,

That, for the arduous task whereto I here
Do turn, befitting strength I may acquire.

“Thou art so nigh to the empyreal sphere,”
Thus Beatrice began, “it now is meet 125
To look thereon with eyes intent and clear.

Thus, ere thou more its glittering depths may greet,
Look downwards ; see how many worlds do lie
Spread out already, low beneath thy feet.

Far as it may, thy heart shall thence draw nigh 130
To those who, joyous, the bright ether cleave,
And upwards like a starry whirlwind fly,

Triumphant.” Then I turn’d me to perceive,
And gaze on the seven spheres ; and saw this earth
Such that I at its meanness smiled : and leave 135

To all this counsel ; that of highest worth
The man who holds it in contempt I deem,
And he is truly wise whose thought goes forth

Elsewhere. And now I saw the silver gleam
Of fair Latona’s daughter ; and the shade 140
Was gone, which erst as rare and dense did seem.

Hyperion, thy son, in light array’d,
I bore to look upon ; and there beheld,

Anear him, Maia and Dionë stay'd.

And thence I gazed upon the golden shield
Of Jupiter, between his son and sire ;
And all their changes were to me reveal'd
Most clearly. And of every several fire
The size and motion I might plainly read,
And how they dwell apart in circling gyre. 150

The little spot which makes us in each deed
So fierce, I wholly saw from shore to shore,
While with the Twins Eternal I did speed :
Then to the fairest eyes I turn'd mine eyes once
more.

CANTO XXIII.

Argument.

The triumph of Christ.—The Archangel Gabriel descends in the form of a flame to crown the Virgin Mary.

EVEN as the bird mid her belovëd leaves,
Who hath repos'd above her cherish'd brood,
During the darkness which from us bereaves

All power of sight ; that she may find their food,
And on the much-lov'd aspect feast her eyes
Of those for whom seem sweet all labours rude,

Ere from the morn the nightly shadow flies,
She seeks the opening boughs, with eager quest,
And waits the sun before the dawn arise :

My fairest Lady thus intent did rest,
All turn'd toward the region where the beam
Of Day doth ever journey in less haste.

5

10

I, seeing her who seem'd as in a dream
 Of vague and eager longing, was as one
 Who, still desiring somewhat, in the gleam

15

Of hope would be content ; yet had there gone
 Short space between my wish and the clear light
 Which o'er this heaven in fairer radiance shone.

Thus Beatrice : "Behold the armies bright
 Of Christ's own triumph ; and the holy fruit,
 Won from the circling spheres by his high might."

20

And then, methought, a splendour so acute
 And dazzling in its pure and joyous sheen,
 Flash'd from her brow, that here I must be mute.

As, when the moon is full, in nights serene,
 Fair Trivia smiles among the nymphs etern,
 Who spangling all the heavenly shore are seen ;

25

Above a thousand fires did I discern
 A Sun that shed o'er all the rest its glow,
 As ours doth light the starry host supern.

30

The living and transparent ray did show
 The shining form within, so bright and clear,
 Mine eyes were forced to sink before it low.

O Beatrice, my gentle guide and dear !—

She spake to me : “ The thing which thus doth o'er 35
Thy strength prevail, is virtue, whence is here
 No shelter. There, the wisdom and the power
Dwell, which hath oped the path 'twixt earth and
 heaven,
By distance sever'd far, in days of yore.”

As fire from out the thunder-cloud is riven, 40
Dilated till it there doth find no space,
But, 'gainst its nature, unto earth is driven :
 Even so my mind, amid this feast of grace,
Enlarged, came forth from its own self amain ;
But of its acts my memory hath no trace. 45

“ Now ope thine eyes, and gaze on me again ;
Already thou hast look'd on things whence thou
Mayst well my smile be strengthen'd to sustain.”

I was as one to whom once more doth flow
Some vision faint of a forgotten dream, 50
And who in vain would its full memory know,

When this I heard, which I might surely deem
Such that it ne'er from out the Book should fade
Which ever signēd with the past doth seem.

If I might summon now unto mine aid 55

All the melodious voices which, of yore,
Were by Polymnia and each sister-maid

Most sweetly nourish'd, yet, with all that ore,
Not even a thousandth portion might I sing
Of the pure smile her radiant aspect wore.

66

Thus, when I fain my sacred verse would bring
To tell the joys of Paradise, 'tis well
That o'er the arduous step my strain should spring,

As where some gaping rent is visible :
But if ye think upon the pond'rous theme,
And the weak shoulder where its weight must dwell,

65

Yet this as cowardice ye should not deem,
Though somewhat here I tremble. This great sea,
Cleft by a daring prow, is, sooth, no stream

For a small bark, nor helmsman who would be
Of idle mood. ¶ Now wherefore do thy eyne
From Christ's fair blooming garden turn to me ?

70

There is the rose in which the Word Divine
Took flesh ; and there are the white lilies pure,
Whose odours sweet do lead in paths benign."

75

Thus Beatrice : and I, who to her sure
And holy counsel still as wont obey'd,

Prepar'd mine eyes that radiance to endure.

As when a sunbeam from the misty shade
Is pourëd forth upon a field of flowers,80
Through a rent cloud, when all beside is stay'd

In dimness ; thus I saw the dazzling showers
Of glory on those starry splendours stream,
While yet I saw not whence flow'd forth their powers.

O light benign, which there didst shed thy gleam,85
Thou rais'dst thyself unto a higher bourne,
To leave more space unto my visual beam !

The name of the fair flower, which, eve and morn,
I still invoke, now drew me to behold
The rays which by the loveliest light were worn.90

As to my longing eyes there did unfold,
The form and brightness of that living star,
Fairest on high, as on the earth, of old,

Within this heaven descended from afar
A splendour circling round her clearest light,95
Even like a glittering crown. All sounds that are,
On earth, of power with melody aright
The hearts of men most deeply to inspire,
Seem but a cloud whence breaks the thunder's might,

Compared with the sweet music of this lyre, 100

Whose golden rays the beauteous sapphire crown'd,

Which gems the brightest land of heavenly fire.

“ I am the Love Angelic, circling round
The lofty gladness which doth breathe from thee,
Whose womb awhile the Highest Hope did bound ; 105

And, Lady of the Heavens, my flight shall be
Still round thee, as thou followest thy Son,
And shedd'st more radiance on the crystal sea

Of the last, highest sphere.” The course was run
Of that sweet voice ; then all those starry rays 110
Sang Mary's name, in strains whose sound was one.

The mantle which its regal splendour lays
On all created realms, and burneth more
With living heat when nearest to the ways

Of God and to his breath, extended o'er
Our heads so far that yet my straining eyes
Might not attain to reach its inmost shore ; 115

And therefore had my glance no power to rise,
And follow the most fair and crown'd flame,
Who in her Son's own track still ever flies. 120

Now, as a child with out-stretch'd arms doth claim

Its mother's love, when it hath suck'd its fill ;

For as the heart, the action is the same :

Thus the white-glistening fires, with eager will,
Stretch'd upwards, so that here I saw the might
Of lofty love which unto Mary still

They bore. And there they tarried in my sight
“*Regina Cœli*” singing, in a strain
So sweet, that aye doth linger its delight.

What store hath in those wealthy coffers lain,
Erst wont to sow on earth, in days of old,
A plenteous measure of the richest grain !

Here do they live, and here the treasure hold,
Which, weeping sore, in exile they have won,
In Babylon, where erst they left their gold.

Here triumpheth, beneath the Holy Son
Of God and Mary, with the Saints on high,
Whose deeds in old and latter times were done,
He in whose hand the keys of all these glories lie.

125

130

135

CANTO XXIV.

Argument.

St. Peter examines Dante on the nature and grounds of Faith.

“O CHOSEN company, who evermore
At the great Supper of the Lamb are fed,
And satisfied from his most bounteous store,
Since, by the grace of God, this man is led
To taste what from your table falls, though still 5
His mortal life not yet its course hath sped,

Look on his eager longing, and fulfil
Somewhat his strong desire : ye drink the stream
For ever, from whose fount his thoughts distil.”

Thus Beatrice : and these glad souls did seem 10
As spheres on polar axis ; and a light
Sent forth, most like a comet’s burning gleam.

As wheels within a clock do turn aright,
In such a wise that ever to our eye
The first seems still, the last in rapid flight ;

Thus, in those carols' fair diversity,
I of their various riches might receive
The measure, as more swift or slow they fly.

From whence I did most loveliness perceive,
I saw come forth a flashing light so fair,
Amid its band none clearer did it leave :

And thrice round Beatrice it circled there,
With a sweet song, whose melody divine
No longer Fantasy to me may bear.

Then let my pen pass o'er this charm'd line ;
Because our imaging (and speech much more)
Doth fail, with hues too bright for mortal eyne.

“ O holy sister, who with such full store
Of fervour prayest, thou dost draw me forth
From out the mystic dance by thy sweet lore.”

Then stay'd this fire of high and bless'd worth,
And tow'rds my Dame the glowing breath did turn,
From whence, as I have said, these words had birth.

And she : “ O light which evermore is worn

By him to whom our Lord hath left the keys 35
He holdeth the fullness of the kingdom.

Examine now, as thee it best shall please,
This man on simple points and deep, which dwell
Within the Faith whereby upon the seas

Thou once didst walk. 'Tis true, thou seëst well
If he believes and hopes and loves aright,
For thou dost gaze where all is visible : 40

Yet, since within this heavenly kingdom bright,
True faith full many a citizen hath brought,
"Tis meet he celebrate its glorious light." 45

As doth the student arm himself in thought,
Nor speaks, until the master doth propound
His question, to approve the answer, not

To end the argument ; even thus I bound
Reason's full armour firmly on my breast, 50
That prompt for such discourse I might be found.

"Thyself now as a Christian manifest :
Say, what is faith ?" Wherefore I rais'd my brow
Unto the Splendour which me thus addrest ;

Then turn'd I unto Beatrice, who now
Made signs that freely forth I here might shed

The stream which from its inward source did flow.

"Now may the grace thus given to me," I said,
 "Unto our Captain to confess my faith,
 With clearer speech unto my thoughts give aid."

60

And added : "As the word veracious saith,
 Father, of thy dear brother, who, I ween,
 With thee erst guided Rome to the true path,

Faith is the evidence of things not seen,
 The substance of things hoped-for : this to me
 Appears its essence, as it aye hath been."

65

And then I heard : "Declare, if here by thee
 Is rightly understood why he doth call
 It evidence and substance." Speedily,

I thus made answer : "The deep things which fall
 Here in my vision's range, yet by the eyes
 Of those who dwell upon the earth are all

70

Unseen ; thus but in faith their being lies :
 Therefore it doth of substance take the name,
 Because from thence our highest hopes arise.

75

And on this faith's foundation do we claim
 To syllogise, when we nought else do see :
 Thus by the name of evidence it came."

And then I heard : " If all the truths, which ye
 Receive on earth as doctrine, thus were learn'd,
 No place for arts sophistical should be." 80

Thus breathed this love which with such splendour
 burn'd ;

Then added : " Now the temper and the weight
 Thou of this coin most surely hast discern'd ;

But say, if it within thy purse is set ?" 85
 And I made answer : " Yea, so clear and bright,
 That of its stamp no doubt my mind doth fret."

Then came from out the depths of that pure light :
 " This jewel fair, from which doth ever grow
 Each virtue, say, whence came to thee its might ?" 90

And I : " The bounteous rain which aye doth flow
 From the most Holy Spirit, and diffuse
 The wealth which new and ancient parchments show,

E'en as a syllogism sure, doth loose
 My mind from doubt so wholly, that anear
 This truth all demonstration were obtuse." 95

And yet once more these accents did I hear :
 " The new and ancient doctrines thou dost hold,
 Why as inspir'd do they to thee appear ?"

And I : "The proofs which do the truth unfold 100
 Are works that follow it ; which nature ne'er
 Hath fused, nor on her anvil hath unroll'd."

"Who shall assure thee that those wonders were
 In very deed ? The thing which thou wouldest prove,
 And none besides, its certitude doth swear." 105

Thus he ; I answer'd : "If the world should move,
 Without a miracle, to Christian truth,
 This were a sign a hundred times above

All other. Poor and lowly thou, in sooth,
 First enteredst the field, this seed to sow ; 110
 Now a wild-briar, a vine in its first youth."

I ended : from the holy Court did flow
"Dio lodiamo" through the spheres on high,
 In melody which but in heaven they know.

And the great Prince, who caused me thus to fly 115
 From branch to branch, hard-press'd, and made me seek
 Now the last leaves, thus framèd his reply :

"The grace, which ever loves thy soul, its weak
 And human nature teacheth, and aright
 Doth move thy lips in fitting words to speak ; 120
 Thus thy discourse is righteous in my sight :

But tell me the belief which in thee lies,
And whence was offer'd unto thee its light."

I said : "O holy father, by whose eyes
That now is seen, so firmly once imprest
By faith, that at the sepulchre the prize

125

Thou gain'dst, o'er younger feet ; of me thy quest
Would know the form of faith which I receive,
And whence to me it is made manifest.

Thus I reply : 'I in one God believe,
Sole and eternal ; who, himself unmoved,
Doth move the heavens their mystic dance to weave

130

Of love and longing. Nor this faith is proved
By physics' or by metaphysics' lore,
But by the gifts of truth to us approved

135

By Moses, by the prophet-seers of yore,
By psalms, and by the Gospel, and by thee,
And by the words the Holy Spirit bore.

And I believe in the Eternal Three,
In essence evermore so One and Trine,
That *sunt et este* there conjoin'd we see.

140

With the deep marvels of the truth divine
I speak of, (though to mortals dim and dark,)

The doctrine evangelic oft doth sign

My spirit. This is the first glimmering spark, 145
Which afterwards dilates in flame, and gleams
In me, as star in heaven." As when ye hark

To some discourse of pleasant sound, which seems
Fraught with good tidings, gladly oft ye fling
Your arms around the messenger ; the beams 150

Which from the Apostolic Radiance spring,
As I was silent, circled round me thrice,
And strains of holy blessing still did sing :

So much he deem'd my answering speech of worthy
price.

CANTO XXV.

Argument.

St. James examines Dante on the nature and ground of Hope.

IF e'er it chanceth that the Sacred Lay,
Wherein have aided me both earth and Heaven,
And which hath made me lean for many a day,
O'ercome the cruelty which forth hath driven
Me from the beauteous fold, within whose bourne, 5
Unfriendly to the wolves who fierce have striven,
Lamb-like I slept ; then, sooth, shall I return
A poet now, with alter'd voice and mien,
And at my font baptismal shall be worn
By me the laurel crown : for there, I ween, 10
The Faith at first I enter'd, which doth lead
Souls unto God ; and now my brow hath been,

For that same Faith, by Peter garlanded.
 Then moved a light from out this band whence came
 The first whom Christ once bade his flock to feed ; 15

And full of gladness spake my fairest Dame :
 “Behold the mighty Prince, of whom below
 Ye in Galicia do the praise proclaim.”

As when the dove doth near and nearer go
 Unto its mate, with sweet and murmuring voice 20

Their mutual love they to each other show ;

Even thus, these glorious spirits did rejoice,
 As each the other at their meeting hail’d,
 With praise to Him who feeds them with such choice
 And heavenly food : then silently unveil’d 25

Their wondrous radiance, with such dazzling light,
 That ’neath its power my mortal vision fail’d.

And, smiling, thus spake Beatrice : “O bright
 Illustrious life, who didst the ample store
 And wealth of our basilica indite, 30

Make Hope resound upon this lofty shore ;
 Thou know’st, as oft as Jesus show’d his pure
 Light but to three, she still thy likeness wore.”

“Now lift thy head, and be thy heart secure ;

That which doth from the mortal world ascend
Must here within our rays become mature."

35

This second Fire such counsel me did lend ;
And then I raised mine eyes unto the hills
Whose heavy weight first made me downward bend
My glance. "Since upon thee God's grace distils
Such power, that ere thy death thou mayst behold
Our Sovereign where his secret glory fills

40

His inmost hall, and he his Court doth hold,
Among his nobles ; that, when thou hast known
Its truth, both thou and others may be bold

45

To seek the Hope which tends to good alone,
Say how and what it is, and whence its spring :"
Thus spake that second Light. She who had flown

With me on high, still guiding my frail wing,
On this wise now prevented my reply :

50

"No son of the Church Militant doth bring
A surer hope, as thou mayst well descry,
Writ in the sun whose shining rays illume
Wholly our band ; thus he, with mortal eye,
Forth from the darkness of Egyptian gloom,
Hath come unto Jerusalem's bright land,

55

Ere yet his strife is ended in the tomb.

The other points (which thou dost not demand
For thine instruction, but that he may tell,
On Earth, how near thy heart this grace doth stand) 60

I leave to him ; for he in sooth can well
Reply without or vanity or fear :
And may God's grace for this within him dwell."

As the disciple answers full and clear,
Of ready speech in all his learnëd lore, 65
That thus his ample knowledge may appear,

"Hope is a patient waiting for the store
Of future glory," (thus I spake) " which springs
From grace divine and merits gone before.

Full many a shining star this radiance brings ; 70
But one first shed its plenteous wealth on me,
The lofty Singer of the King of Kings.

'Let those who know thy name have hope in thee,'
He in his Odes Divine hath said ; and who
Doth know it not, if in his heart there be 75

True faith ? Thou also shower'st on me this dew,
In thy Epistle ; so that being fill'd,
On others I its rain may shed anew."

The while I spake, within the living shield
 Of fire, a radiance trembled, in such wise,
 As if the lightning's flash I had beheld ;

80

And thence was breathed : "True love which in
 me lies

Still for the virtue which my footsteps led,
 Until I won the palm and heavenly prize,

Bids me discourse with thee, who aye dost spread 85
 Her joys before thee : me it pleaseth well
 That thou declare what Hope hath promisëd."

And I : "The new and ancient Scriptures tell
 The sign." And he : "Then shew that sign to me."
 "Of souls with whom God as a friend doth dwell, 90

Isaiah saith, each one shall clothëd be
 Doubly when he in his own land shall rest ;
 And his own land is this sweet life ye see.

Thy brother hath yet more this truth exprest,
 Where in the vision of the raiment white, 95
 Its revelation was made manifest."

I spake ; and ere my speech was closed aright,
 "Sperent in te" a voice on high did say :
 In melody replied each choir of light.

And then, among them shone so bright a ray,
In sooth, had Cancer such a crystal shrine,
Winter should have a month of one sole day.

And, moving to this harmony divine,
As a glad maiden who unto a bride
Would show due honour, not with evil sign,

A clear and radiant splendour I descried,
Advancing to the twain who circled round,
Led by the love which in them did abide.

It mingled with the strain and the sweet sound ;
And still my Dame on them her gaze did rest,
Silent and moveless, as a maiden crown'd
With bridal flowers. “ Of yore, upon the breast
Of Him who fed us with his blood, he leant
Whom thou beholdest ; unto him addrest

The Saviour from his Cross the office blent
Of holiest love.” Thus Beatrice : I gazed,
Even as before she spake, with fix'd intent ;

And stood as one who looks, with glance upraised,
In faint eclipse to see the sun appear,
Till wholly is the dazzled eye amazed,
Nor seeth, for too much light ; while to mine ear

100

105

110

115

120

Came from the latest fire : " Why dost thou still
 Thy vision strain to see what is not here ?

In earth, my corpse is earth ; and shall be, till,
 In counsels which deep-hidden aye remain,
 God shall the number of his Saints fulfil.

Two only might the shore of bliss attain,
 With twofold garb ; the twain who rose on high :
 Take back this truth unto your world again."

No longer then in circling gyres they fly,
 And the soft mingling music now was still,
 Which erst in threefold voice made melody ;

As when the oars, to shun some threaten'd ill,
 Or rest from toiling, ere they strike the wave
 All stay their motion at the signal shrill.

Ah ! what swift tremour through my spirit clave,
 When I to Beatrice again would turn,
 And saw not her whom all my heart did crave ;
 Though near her now I stood, within the heavenly
 bourne !

CANTO XXVI.

Argument.

St. John examines Dante on the nature and ground of Heavenly Love.—The soul of Adam appears and discourses concerning his life in Paradise, his sojourn in Hades, and the first language of man.

THE while I fear'd, because my sight was spent
By the resplendent flame which me did blind,
There came a breath which fixed my thoughts intent,

And said : “Till thou art strong once more to find
The visual power which thou hast lost, affray'd
By me, 'tis well to solace here thy mind,

Discoursing. Then declare whereon is stay'd
Thy heart's desire ; for thou mayst be secure,
Thy vision is but lost, not wholly dead.

Because the Lady who through this most pure
Resplendent region leads thee, now doth hold
Within her eyes the self-same power to cure,

Possess'd by Ananias' hand, of old."

I said : "The remedy, whene'er she will,
May come unto those gates which did unfold, 15
That she might enter with the fire whence still
I burn. The Good which aye content doth shed
O'er all this Court, doth ever wholly fill
The page by love more clear or faintly read,
Its Alpha and its Omega." And now 20
The voice which took from me my sudden dread,
Caused by the radiance of that blinding glow,
To hold discourse again made me intent,
And said : "More closely sifted thou must show
Thy thoughts, and tell what hand thy bow hath bent 25
Towards its mark." And thus did I reply :
"In truth, by philosophic argument,
And by authority which from on high
Descends, such love should on my heart be seal'd ;
For good, as it is good, in us must aye, 30
Whene'er its nature is no more conceal'd,
Enkindle love, which doth the higher soar,
As more of goodness is thereto reveal'd.
Then to the Essence where such ample store

Abideth, that all good things which ye find

In aught besides but give ye back once more

The reflex of his splendour, should the mind

Of each who clearly doth the truth discern,

In which this proof is founded, ever bind

Its love most firmly. And this truth I learn

From him who teaches me the lofty worth

Of love, the primal substance sempitern.

The voice of the great Author sets it forth,

Who unto Moses said : ‘Thou shalt behold

My goodness.’ Thou too spak’st of it on earth,

When thou the Gospel-message didst unfold,

Which o’er all revelation soars on high,

And hath before the sons of men unroll’d

The hidden things which in your world do lie.”

I heard : “By light which doth from reason spring,

And by authority agreeing aye

Therewith, thy highest love unto the king

Of Heaven in sovereign measure should be led.

But now dost thou perceive no other string

That draws thee tow’rds him ? By thy lips be said

How many and how sharp the points whereby

This love doth spur thee." Nor from me was hid

The holy thought which in the speech did lie
Of him, the Eagle of the Lord ; but well
I saw that he my heart of hearts would try.

Once more I spake : " All things which e'er befel
Of power to make the soul to God return,
With their full store my love's deep river swell.

My being, and the being of each bourne,
Of the whole Universe ; the death which He
Endur'd, that I might live ; the hope still worn

By every faithful spirit, as by me,
Join'd with the living consciousness of which
I spake, have drawn me forth from out the sea
Of evil love, and set me on the beach

Of that which ne'er is turned aside to wrong.

E'en to the leaves of God's own trees doth reach
My love, but as He loves them." Now a song
Of softest music floated through the sky,
And " Holy, holy, holy," with that throng

My Lady sang. As, oft, when sleep doth fly
From sudden light, which then, from fold to fold,
Enters within the newly rousëd eye,

60

65

70

75

The slumb'rer, waken'd, doth its ray behold
 With dread ; because he is too weak to bear
 Its splendour, till his reason makes him bold : 80

Even thus the scales which did my sight impair
 Fled from the glance of Beatrice, which shone
 A thousand miles and more. Then clearer were

Mine eyes than ere their visual power had gone ; 85
 And, stupefied, I ask'd, in sore amaze,
 Of a fourth Light which made his presence known

Anear us. And my Dame : " Within those rays
 The first-created soul of man doth bring
 Unto his Maker worship and high praise." 90

As leaves which to the topmost branches cling,
 When the wind passes o'er them bend the bough,
 Then rise, since their own strength doth upward spring ;

Thus I, the while she this to me did show ;
 And much I marvell'd : then again secure, 95
 The longing wish to speak shed forth its glow,

And I began : " O fruit, the sole mature
 Produced from its first hour, O ancient sire,
 The father of each bride while Earth shall 'dure,

And of her spouse ! I pray with strong desire, 100

That thou wouldest speak to me : thou seëst well
 My wish ; thus, lest some hindrance I inspire,

In words my thought is not made visible."

As, when ye o'er an animal do fling
 Some covering, ye may each motion tell,

105

Since closely that which wraps it round doth cling,
 Thus did the earliest soul show forth to me
 The joy which he to grant my suit did bring ;

And thence was breathed : "Though all untold
 by thee,

Thy wish more clearly by mine eyes is seen, 110
 Than e'er by thine the surest certainty,

For I in the true mirror gaze, I ween,
 Which o'er created things sheds double light,
 Receiving light from none. How long hath been

Since I was placed by God within the bright 115
 And blooming garden of all lovely flowers,
 Whence this fair Dame hath led thy steps aright,

Up by so high a stair ; how long its bowers
 Mine eyes delighted ; and the proper cause
 Of ill ; the speech which in those pleasant hours

120

I used and made : all this thy spirit draws

With curious longing. Know, my son, in truth,
 'Twas not the tree, but breaking of God's laws,

That caused such exile. Thus, where the soft ruth

Of thy sweet Dame sent Virgil to thine aid,

125

For One to give the world again its youth

I long'd, till on its course the sun had sped

Four thousand and three hundred times and twain ;

And through each glittering sign its orb was led

Nine hundred times and thirty, ere was ta'en

130

From me my mortal life. The tongue I spake

Was wholly spent, ere yet the fruitless pain

Of Nimrod's race was ended. Ye awake

No voice immutable by human will,

Which, changing with the rolling skies, doth make

135

No durable result. By nature still

Ye speak ; but thus, or thus, is left, I wis,

That ye therein your pleasure may fulfil.

Ere I descended to the deep abyss,

El was the name by which the earth did know

140

That Highest One, who clothes me here with bliss ;

Eloï then : and this doth plainly show

That mortal use doth ever pass away,

870.11

As leaves upon the bough do come and go.

I, on the mount which lifts its fair array

145

High o'er the wave, abode in good and ill

From the first hour to that which aye doth stay

Beyond the sixth, when Day its quadrant doth fulfil."

CANTO XXVII.

Argument.

All the hosts of Heaven sing praises to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—Wrath of St. Peter against those who usurp his place on earth.—Dante ascends to the ninth celestial sphere.—Beatrice reproves the degeneracy of the age, and announces happier days to come.

Now to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
In the sweet songs of Paradise, the while,
Was “Glory” sung by all the heavenly host.

That which I saw did seem to me a smile
Of the whole Universe ; because both ear
And eye the ’wild’ring vision did beguile. 5

O joy ! O bliss ineffable and clear !
O life entire of holy love and peace !
O certain riches, all undimm’d by fear !

The four resplendent ones yet did not cease
Near me to burn ; and he who first had come,
In dazzling radiance ever did increase : 10

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And o'er his aspect then meseem'd that some
 Mutation pass'd, as though both Jove and Mars
 Were birds of heaven, and had exchanged each plume. 15

The Providence, that 'mong these choral stars
 Assigns to each its rule and office, now
 On every side their host from speech debars ;

And then I heard : "If changed thou seest me glow,
 Yet marvel not ; for at my words thy eyne 20
 Shall see the rest an alter'd semblance show.

He who usurps on earth that throne of mine,
 That throne of mine, that throne of mine, which lies
 Vacant in presence of the Son Divine,

My burial-place hath made a sink, whence rise 25
 Foul steams of blood and filth ; and, thence, below
 In Hell, the Fiend rejoiceth, whom the skies

Cast forth." The hue which, when the sun is low,
 Painteth the fleeting clouds, both morn and eve,
 O'er all the heaven suffused its burning glow ; 30

And, as a modest maid, who doth believe
 Herself most blameless, yet if she but hear
 Another's fault, all timidly may grieve,

Thus Beatrice a changèd brow did wear :

And such eclipse, methinks, was erst in heaven,
When Jesus died, of yore. Then to mine ear

The voice of him who spake so changed was given,
That, sooth, more alter'd did I not behold
His mien, as o'er him gusts of wrath seem'd driven :

“ Deem not the Spouse of Christ was fed of old,
With blood of Linus, Cletus, and with mine,
Now to be used for the vile gain of gold.

But for the gain of this blest life benign,
Sixtus, Calixtus, Pius, Urban, shed
Their blood with suff'ring, for the hope divine.

We meant not that of Christian men be stay'd,
Part at the left, and part at the right hand
Of him who in our mantle is array'd ;

Nor that the keys I bear by Christ's command,
Should, broider'd on a warlike banner, go
To join in ranks of battle 'gainst the band

Of the baptised ; nor that my image show
Its impress on a seal by which is gain'd
Some lying privilege, whence oft I glow

With wrath. In shepherds' garments have remain'd, 55
On all the pastures, a fierce wolfish brood :

you

O hand of God, why is thy might restrain'd ?

Those of Cahors and Gascony our blood
Prepare to drink : O fountain, pure at first,
With what vile things thou must be now imbued !

60

But the High Might, which did by Scipio erst
In Rome the glory of the world defend,
Forth from its clouds full soon will surely burst :

And thou, my son, who must once more descend
Down to the mortal earth, since thou dost lie
Beneath the weight of flesh which thee doth bend,
There tell this truth I speak.” As from the sky
Our air sheds down the snow-flakes, when the horn
Of the clear-glittering Goat of heaven on high

65

Touches the Sun ; thus Ether did adorn
Herself with flakes of vaporous light, which float
Still upward, once with us in this our bourne.

70

My steadfast gaze the soaring vision sought,
Until, for their great multitude, mine eye
Their path triumphant now perceivéd not.

75

Then Beatrice, who did full well descry
That now no more my glance had upward flown
Thus spake : “Behold, thy chang'd site espy !”

And then I knew, since erst I gazed adown,
That I had moved through all the arc by which
From midst to verge is formëd the first zone.

There beyond Gades did my vision reach
Ulysses' venturous path ; and here, where sweet
Europa once was borne unto the beach :

And more, perchance, of our small earth might greet 85
Mine eyes ; but now the sun had, on his way,
Gone forth a sign or more beneath my feet.

My mind enamour'd, in whose depth there lay
Love for my fairest Lady evermore,
Glow'd with yet stronger wish, on her bright ray

To gaze. If ever Art or Nature's lore
Created somewhat which the heart might fill,
In breathing form, or e'en in painting's store,

All should seem nought, comparëd with the still
Diviner joy, which through my spirit swell'd,
As to her smile I turn'd. The wondrous thrill

Of power, received while I her glance beheld,
From Leda's lovely nest now sent me forth,
And in the swiftest heaven my course impell'd.

There every portion hath such living worth,

80

90

95

100

In truth I know not, in its purest fire,
What region was allotted for the birth

Of my new knowledge. But my strong desire
Was seen by Beatrice, who smiling said,
With mien so fair, that e'en the Eternal Sire

105

Therein seem'd glad : "The motion which doth shed
Stillness upon the midst, and all the rest
Doth move in circuit, here begins, as sped

Forth from its goal. This region of the blest
No other impulse hath, but from the mind
Divine, which lights the love that hath imprest

Its course, and all the power from thence assign'd ;
For light and love do circle round it still,
As this round others. Here alone ye find

His guidance who doth gird it with his will :
Its motion from no other source may flow ;
All others do its measure but fulfil,

As ten from out its fifth and half doth grow.
Here are the roots of Time ; elsewhere its leaves
Spring forth : and this thou here may'st clearly know. 120

O dire cupidity, which aye deceives
So sorely mortal men, that none have power,

From out the wave which thus their sight bereaves
 To rise ! In man well flourishes the flower
 Of Will ; but ceaseless rain converts to wild
 And worthless fruitage the true plumtree's store.

Ye find not now, save in a little child,
 Or innocence or faith ; for both are fled,
 Ere springs the down upon the cheek. One, mild,

In early youth doth fast, who since hath fed, 130
 At every season, on all kinds of food :
 And one, when as a lisping infant led,
 Obeys his mother's word, in loving mood,
 Who, when he speaks with manhood's voice, would fain
 Behold her in her grave, as his chief good. 135

Thus o'er the skin, once white, a darksome stain
 Hath come, of the fair child of him whom morn
 Doth bring, and evening bear from us again.

Think, that no marvel thence in thee be born,
 None on the earth do rule or guidance bring ; 140
 Thus, to all evil things mankind doth turn.

Ere the last month of winter pass to spring,
 (For the small fraction ye on earth neglect)
 So loud a voice within those spheres shall ring,

That, sooth, the fortune ye so long expect 145
The poop shall turn where now the prow doth speed :
And thus the ship shall hold a course direct ;
And to the bud and flower shall worthy fruit succeed."

CANTO XXVIII.

Argument.

Vision of the Divine Essence, surrounded by the celestial hierarchy.

WHEN, turning from the mournful life which lies
Within our mortal earth, I saw the bright
True joy in her, my spirit's paradise,

As in a mirror the reflected light

Ye see, if one a torch behind you bears,

Ere ye are 'ware of it by thought or sight,

And turn, to know if what the glass declares
Be true ; and ye behold it thus agree,

As music with the song whose notes it wears ;

Even thus, my memory brings back to me,
I did, when on the lovely eyes I gazed,
From whose bright beams are ta'en the cords which be

Cast round my heart by love. As, sore amazed,
I now look'd round on that which in this sphere
Is seen whene'er the eye thereto is raised,

15

A point of glory I beheld, whose clear
Resplendence closed with sharply dazzling beam
My shrinking eyes. The star that doth appear

Smallest, when gazed on from our earth, should seem
As when the moon's most rounded sphere doth rise,
Compared with this, if of those orbs ye deem

20

As measured each with each. As, to our eyes,
A halo seems to girdle round the light
Which paints it when the vapour densest lies,

Even at like distance, there, a garland bright
Of fires around that point so swiftly sped,
As wholly vanquish'd the most rapid flight

25

Which girds the world ; and round the first was led
A second, and a third, a fourth, and then
A fifth and sixth their circling glory spread.

30

Now did the seventh such ample space contain,
That Juno's messenger could scarce embrace
So wide a field upon the heavenly plain ;
And thus the eighth and ninth : and all do trace

Their course more slowly, as their orbits turn
More distant from the point of central space ;

And ever did the flame more clearly burn,
When nearest to that spark of purest fire :
I think, since more its truth therein is worn.

And Beatrice, who saw my strong desire, 40
Thus spake : “Behold the Point from which depends
The heavens, and whence all nature doth respire.

Gaze on the circle which most near it tends,
And know that its swift motion aye hath been
Impell’d by love’s warm glow, which ever sends

It onward.” I replied : “If there were seen
In all the universe the order here
Beheld, I then were satisfied, I ween.

But in the world of sense do still appear
The heavenly vaults in beauty more divine, 50
As they are further from the central sphere ;

Thus, if my longing should in this benign
And wondrous angel-temple be fulfill’d,
Where only love and light its bounds confine,
The knowledge yet in me must be instill’d, 55
Why the example and exemplified

Be diverse ; vainly would my mind be skill'd
 This thing to look on." " If thy hands have tried,
 In vain, to loose this knot, yet should it leave
 In thee no marvel ; therefore is it tied 60

So hard, that none attempt it. But receive
 That which I say, if thou wouldest be content,
 And round it all thy subtle fancies weave."

My Lady spake ; then added : " The extent
 Of those material spheres is less and more, 65
 As more or less of virtue, there, is blent.

A greater goodness gives a greater store ;
 A greater store in greater space abides,
 If full perfection be dispensëd o'er

Each part : even so this sphere, which, as it glides, 70
 Bears the vast universe, doth image those
 Whose love and knowledge flow in amplest tides.

Thus he who o'er the inward essence throws
 His measuring-line, regarding not alone
 The outward semblance which around it grows, 75

Shall know the wondrous fitness in each zone,
 Of much to more, of few to less, still seen
 Within each heaven, to the angelic throne

Which rules it." As, resplendent and serene,
 Ye see the blue aërial hemisphere, 80
 When Boreas breathes softly, and the sheen
 No more is dim with vapour, and the clear
 Bright Ether smiles with all its retinue :
 Even thus was I, as soon as to mine ear
 The words of Beatrice were borne which drew 85
 Aside the veil that o'er my heart was spread ;
 And, as a star in heaven, the truth I knew.
 Then, when no more her speech continuëd,
 None otherwise than seething iron flings
 The sparks around, those flying circles shed 90
 A glittering shower, which join'd the whirling rings :
 So many were those sparkles of keen fire,
 That, more than on the doubled chess-board, springs
 Their number thousand fold. From choir to choir,
 I heard Hosanna chanted to the lone 9
 And fixëd Point from whence they all respire,
 And shall for aye, as in the ages gone.
 She spake, who saw my doubt : " First, unto thee
 The Cherubim and Seraphim are shown.
 Their wreathëd course so rapidly doth flee,

To bear more likeness to yon Point of Light ;

And still the greater glory which ye see

In them, they more resemble it. Those bright
And loving Ones, who next them are beheld,
Are Thrones of God's own aspect : thus aright

105

Ends the first triple quire. And all are fill'd
With joy, the more they see the depths profound
Of truth, wherein all intellects are still'd.

Here may be plainly seen that the true ground
Of bliss is in the act of vision stay'd,
And not in love, which afterward is found :

110

And of this vision is just measure made
By deeds which grace brings forth and righteous will ;
And thus doth it proceed, from grade to grade.

This other triple zone, whose bloom doth fill
With freshest fragrance the eternal spring,
Where Aries by night doth ne'er distil

The spoiling blight, for aye Hosanna sing,
In threefold melody, whose strain doth sound
In triple gladness from their threefold ring.

120

For in this hierarchy three hosts are found
First, Dominations ; Virtues next ye see ;

Then the third zone, of Powers. While, circling round,

In the two bands penultimate there be,
First, Principalities ; Archangels then : 125
The last is wholly Angel-melody.

On high their gaze do all those legions strain ;
Downwards they rule : and to the Eternal Sire
All are impell'd, and all impel again.

And Dionysius with such strong desire 130
Their ranks contemplated, that he, as I,
Distinguish'd by its name each heavenly quire.

But Gregory a different path did try ;
And thus he smiled, at last, at his own thought,
When he awoke upon this shore on high. 135

And if, on earth, a mortal mind was fraught
With such deep secrets, marvel not ; for he
Who saw them once in Heaven that lesson taught
To him, with other truths which in these zones
there be."

CANTO XXIX.

Argument.

Beatrice discourses concerning the creation and rebellion of the Angels ; and reproves the preachers who occupy themselves only with vain and subtle questions.

WHEN both the children of Latona stand,
By Aries and Libra hid, and make
Of one horizon their encircling band,
Even for the space of time which it doth take
To free them from the equipoise, erewhile
Held by the zenith, ere its bonds they break,
Changing their hemisphere ; so long the smile
Of Beatrice endured, who silent stood,
Gazing on that which on my soul did pile

Such deep amaze. She said : "I speak, nor would 10
Demand of thee thy thought ; for it is seen
Where Time and Space do meet. Not seeking good

Unto Himself (which cannot be, I ween),
But that His splendour might, resplendent, say :
' I am ; ' before the birth of Time hath been,

In the long ages of eternal day,
Beyond the knowledge of created lore,
Even as it pleased Him, a still newer ray

Of love the Love Eternal, from his store,
Brought forth : yet not at first in torpor slept ;
For neither first nor latest went before

God's footsteps o'er the darksome waters swept.
Both form and matter, join'd and pure, did flow
Forth from an act wherein no error crept,

As spring three arrows from a three-string'd bow.
And as in amber, crystal, or in glass
A sunbeam shines with instantaneous glow,

Thus the effect trifor m its being has ;
And, from its dawn to full and perfect day,
Did in the self-same moment wholly pass.

And with these substances their order'd way
Was concreate ; they are the highest band
Of all the world, wherein their fair array

Was but for action made : the lowest strand

15

20

25

30

Contains each power of merely passive might ;
 While, in the midst, do closely mingled stand
 Passive and active. Jerome erst did write
 Of angel-hosts, created many an age
 Ere the material world first dawn'd in light :

But yet ye read the truth, within the page
 Of those who writ the Holy Spirit's song ;
 And thou shalt see it, if thou well engage
 Thereto thy mind. Of this the reason strong
 Thou in some measure also mayst perceive ;
 'Twas fit the Motive Spirits should not long

Exist, ere perfect. How they did receive,
 And when, and whence, their being, thou dost know ;
 Three of thy wishes thus thy mind should leave.

Nor, counting, unto twenty couldst thou go
 So soon, as of those angels did a part
 Disturb your elemental sphere below :

The rest stood firm, and then began their art
 Which thou discernest, with so much delight,
 That never from their task do they depart.

The root of all perdition was the spite
 Of pride accursëd, in his heart whom thou

35

40

45

50

55

Saw'st bow'd 'neath every weight of earthly might.

Each, whom thou here dost look on, bent his brow,
Acknowledging the goodness which had made
The powers from whence such influences flow;

Therefore their merits upon them have laid
Such insight deep, with grace illumining,
That full and firm their will for aye is stay'd.

I would not aught of doubt in thee should spring :
When thou receivest grace, doth merit lie
In thee, thy heart thereto still opening.

Unaided now, this high consistory
Thou mayst contemplate, if thou well hast brought
This my discourse before thy mental eye.

But, since on earth among your schools are taught
Such tales concerning the angelic mind,
Ascribing Will, and Memory, and Thought

Thereto, I tell thee (that thou be not blind
Unto the truth confusëd there below
With error, but its purity mayst find),

These substances, because they aye do glow
In God's own light, have never turn'd away
From that where nought may hid nor veilëd go :

- No newer object hindereth its ray ;
 Therefore they have no need of Memory's gleam, 80
 To call to life once more a by-gone day :
 And those on earth are in a waking dream
 Who do this thing believe or disbelieve ;
 But yet, in one, more sin and shame I deem.
 Ye who philosophise do often leave 85
 The path ; so much ye are transported by
 The semblance of the praise ye would receive.
 Yet is this evil look'd on from on high
 With lesser wrath, than when ye would have lost
 The Holy Scriptures, or their meaning try 90
 To wrest. Ye think not of the blood it cost
 To sow them in the world, nor the increase
 Of grace he hath who ne'er their lore hath cross'd.
 But, somewhat to appear, each doth not cease
 His fancies to invent ; and these alone 95
 They preach, the while the Gospel holds its peace.
 And one doth say the moon had backward gone
 When Christ was slain, and interposed her orb ;
 And thus, below, no ray of sunlight shone.
 Some deem the light did then itself absorb, 100

And fled ; thus in the Indies and in Spain
Did that eclipse the minds of men disturb,

As in Judea. Florence doth contain
Less store of those who are or Lapo hight,
Or Bindo, than of fables in this strain,

105

Which every year on parchment they indite,
And vaunt, now here, now there. The silly sheep
Return from pasture fed with wind ; nor might
The ignorance excuse them, which doth steep
Them wholly, seeing not their wakeful foe,
Whose stealthy footsteps tow'rds the fold do creep.

To his first company Christ said not : ‘ Go,
Unto the world preach folly ; ’ but a true
Foundation gave he them. On earth below,
So long and loud a trumpet-blast he blew,
That, sooth, to fight the battles of the Faith,
From out the Gospel, shield and lance they drew.

But now, they teach with quirks and jesting breath ;
And if the list’ners laugh, at every word,
Proudly the preacher onward hasteneth :

While in the cowl there nestleth a bird
Which, if the people saw, they soon should know

110

115

120

What pardon they confide in. Thus is stirr'd
 Such foolishness on earth, and still doth grow,
 That, without proof of testimony, they 125
 Do after every promise freely go.

And thus St. Anton's swine grow fat, each day,
 And others who, in truth, are worse than swine,
 And do in false and uncoin'd money pay.

But, since we have digress'd, now turn thy eyne 130
 To the straight path, that thus the way be made
 More short, as is the time which yet is thine.

This nature doth extend, from grade to grade,
 So far, upon the bright celestial field,
 That here all mortal speech and thought is stay'd. 135

And if thou lookest on the lore reveal'd
 By Daniel, in his thousands thou shalt know
 That all determined number is conceal'd.

The Primal Light, which o'er them sheds its glow,
 They in as many diverse ways receive, 140
 As diverse splendours from their armies flow :
 Therefore, since to the act which doth perceive,
 A like affection must succeed, doth love
 A diverse sweetness in each spirit leave.

And here the height and fulness thou mayst prove 145
Of the Eternal Power, who doth divide
His rays, which o'er so many mirrors move ;
Yet One for evermore that Light doth still abide."

CANTO XXX.

Argument.

Ascent to the Empyrean.—Dante sees the Angels, in the form of a river of light, flowing between flowery banks, of which each blossom is the soul of a saint.—Prophecy concerning the Emperor Henry VII.

THE hour of noon sheds forth its sultry beam,
Perchance six thousand miles from us afar,
The while the shadow of our Earth doth seem
 To lie bent downwards low, most like a bar
Of level darkness, when more faint appear 5
The rays, in the deep zenith, of each star ;
 And, as the Day's bright handmaid draweth near,
From depth to depth the heaven no longer shows
Its glories, till is hid the fairest sphere :
 None otherwise that triumph, which arose 10
Rejoicing round the Point which me o'ercame,
Seeming enclosed in what it did enclose,

By slow degrees unto mine eyes became
Invisible ; then love, and seeing nought,
Caused me to turn unto my fairest Dame.

15

If all I e'er have sung of her were brought
Together in one strain of lofty lays,
Yet with too weak a power my words were fraught.

The loveliness which now transfix'd my gaze
So far exceeds our measure, that, I think,
Only her Maker knoweth all her praise.

20

Conquer'd, beneath this burden do I sink,
More than e'er bow'd, beneath some weighty theme,
He who would fain the Muses' fountain drink,

Tragic or comic. As the sunny beam
Makes weakest vision tremble, thus for aye
The memory of that sweetest smile doth gleam

25

Until my heart is faint. From the first day
When I, in life, beheld her, until now,
I ne'er have ceased of her to sing a lay :

30

But here my strain must needs no further go,
Nor follow her bright loveliness, in song ;
As artist who no greater skill can show.

Such, as I leave unto a voice more strong

Than I can bring from out my feeble might,
Which strives to end its labour hard and long,

Thus she began : “ We now do take our flight,
And from the vastest realm of matter prove
The path unto the heaven of purest light ;

Light intellectual and full of love,
Love of true good where joy doth dwell for aye,
Joy which doth soar all sweetest things above.

Here shalt thou see the glorious array
Of both the hosts of Paradise ; and one,
As thou shalt see it at the judgment-day.”

Even as a flame that suddenly hath shone,
The visual power dispersing, which aright
Of the most vivid objects seëth none ;

Thus flash'd around me clear and living light,
And left me wrapp'd in such a veil of this
Its splendour, that it hid from out my sight

All else. “ The Love which stills this heaven in bliss
Such salutation ever doth bestow,
To fit the candle to its flame, I wis.”

Scarcely mine ears did these brief accents know,
When I perceived that now my strength excell'd

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All that, as yet, within my soul might flow :

And newer powers my visual orbs impell'd,
So keen that no resplendence here could bring
To me perplexity. For I beheld

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A river of pure light aye wandering
Between two shores that did its sheen enfold,
Painted with fairest hues of wondrous spring.

And ever, as its dazzling waters roll'd,
Bright sparks arose, and settled on the flowers,
Which seem'd like glowing rubies set in gold.

65

Then, as inebriate with those sweet bowers,
They plunge once more into the shining stream,
And, as one sinks, another upward soars.

“ The high desire, which on thy brow doth beam,
To know in ampler guise what thou dost see,
Doth please me more as stronger is its gleam.

70

But of this marvellous wave it needs must be
Thou drink, before thy thirst be quench'd aright : ”
She said, who was as sunlight unto me.

75

And added then : “ The river ; and each bright
Topaz which comes and goes ; the smile of flowers ;
Are of their truth but shadows, in thy sight.

Not that o'er these a cloud of darkness lowers ;
 But from defects which upon thee do lie,
 Whose vision hath not yet such heavenly powers."

No infant ever doth so quickly fly
 Unto his mother's breast, if he awake
 More late than is his usage, than did I,

A clearer mirror of mine eyes to make,
 Inclining me toward the waves which flow
 From whence the Blessëd all good gifts partake.

And as mine eyelids, bending downwards low,
 Drank of the flood, its tide, which I had seen
 Gush in straight course, in circuit seem'd to go.

And then, as those who hid by masks have been,
 And change their semblance, soon as they divest
 Themselves of that which hideth their true mien,

Thus in more festal aspect now were drest
 The flowers and glittering sparks ; and I beheld
 Both the high courts of heaven made manifest.

Splendour of God, by which I there beheld
 The lofty triumph of the truest throne,
 Now give me strength to sing what I beheld !

There is a light above, whence aye hath shone

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100

The High Creator unto those who find
Their peace in gazing upon Him alone ;

And in a circle doth so far extend,
That its circumference too vast had been
The sun with its bright girdling fire to bind : 105

And all its semblance is of dazzling sheen,
Reflected down to the first mobile sphere,
Which thence receives both life and power, I ween.

And, as a hill is mirror'd in the clear
And limpid lake which its fair hues adorn,
What time its richest herbs and blooms appear, 110

Even thus, around that light which aye doth burn,
More than a thousand ranks I saw, of those
Who from our Earth did homeward erst return.

And if the smallest circle doth enclose
So great a light, bethink thee then, how wide
Must be the furthest petals of that rose ? 115

In all this breadth and height, on every side,
My gaze yet did not lose itself, but all
The rule and manner of its joy descried. 120

There, far and near, no change doth e'er befall ;
For, where God rules directly, in these skies,

There dwell no laws of order natural.

From out the golden heart that ever lies

Deep in the sempiternal rose which here

Dilates, sweet odours evermore arise

Of praise unto the Sun that to this sphere

Brings ceaseless spring. As one who doth desire

Both speech and silence, Beatrice did bear

Me on, and said : "Behold the white-stoled quire ! 130

Behold our city's ample bounds, and see

Our ranks so full, that few may now aspire

Thereto. Yon throne, to which thy glances be

Drawn by the diadem above, shall, ere

The heavenly supper may be shared by thee, 135

Be fill'd by the great Henry, who shall wear

On earth the crown of Cæsar, and shall lay

His sceptre upon Italy, when there,

As yet men are not fitted for his sway.

The blind cupidity, from whence ye pine,

Hath made you like the child who drives away

His nurse, although an hunger'd. The divine

Forum shall then be ruled by one who, hid

Or openly, with him in the same line

125

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Walks not a step. But, little time shall speed,
Ere from the holy office God shall send
Him down where Simon Magus hath his meed ;
He of Alagna then to lower depths shall wend."

CANTO XXXI.

Argument.

Description of the two hosts of Heaven.—Beatrice ascends to her throne, and sends St. Bernard to Dante.

THUS in the semblance of a snow-white rose,
I there beheld the army of the Blest,
Whom Christ did with his precious blood espouse :
The while those others, who, withouten rest,
Still as they fly do ever see and sing 5
His glory who such love on them imprest,
His goodness whence their gladsome life doth spring,
Even as a swarm of bees that on a flower
A moment pause, and one its flight doth wing
There where its labour gains its sweetest power, 10
Thus in the vast and many-petall'd bloom
Descended, and then once again they soar

To where their love finds aye such ample room.
Their faces all were of the living flame,
On wings of gold they seek each sweet perfume, 15
All else so white that never snow-flake came
To such pure, glistering perfectness : and where
They on the flower do pause, they shed the same
Calm love and peace which on their flight they bear;
Nor, 'twixt the blossom and the splendour high, 20
Does all their wingëd plenitude impair
The vision of its glory. Since for aye
The light divine doth pierce each heavenly strand,
In measure of its worth, ye nought descry
That hides it. In this sure and joyous land, 25
Fill'd with the souls of new and ancient days,
All on one love and sign intent do stand.
O threefold Light, that, join'd within the rays
Of one sole star contents them evermore,
Look down upon our Earth's dark, stormy ways ! 30
If the Barbarians (from the distant shore
Above which Helicë for aye doth speed
Her course, with the belovëd son she bore)
Beholding Rome and all its wondrous meed

Of glory, stood with sorely 'mazëd eyne, 35

When Lateran did all mortal things exceed,

I, who had come from human to divine,

From things of Time unto Eternity,

From Florence to a race of souls benign

And just, what stupor reignëd now in me ! 40

In sooth, 'twixt that and joy, the time had pass'd

Most gladly, hearing nought, and silently.

And, as a pilgrim who doth stand, at last,

When he the temple of his vow hath found,

And hopes to tell its grandeur, and doth cast 45

His glances here and there ; thus through this
bound

Of living light, mine eyes along each grade

I sent, now high, now low, now round and round.

There saw I brows which to fair love persuade,

Gemm'd with the light of God and with his smile, 50

And acts in all sweet honesty array'd.

The outward form of Paradise, the while

My mind already wholly understood ;

Yet did no single part my thoughts beguile.

And then I turn'd me round, in eager mood, 55

That I might ask my Dame to solve the high
And curious doubts which here my soul imbued.

One thing I meant ; another did reply :
I thought to look on Beatrice, and lo !
A venerable Form to me drew nigh,

60

Who clad as one of the Redeem'd did go :
Diffusëd o'er his brow and eyes was shed
Benign and pious joy, as well might show

A tender father. Quickly then I said :
“ But she ; where hath she vanish'd ? ” He replied : 65
“ I, moved by Beatrice, have hither sped,

From out the heavenly place where I abide,
To end thy long desire. If the third zone
Within the highest grade thou hast descried,

There thou shalt well behold her, on the throne 70
Allotted to her meed.” I answer'd not ;

But raised mine eyes to her, who wove a crown
Of splendour, with the rays eternal fraught.

No mortal eye, from that far realm of air
Whence highest are the rolling thunders brought,

75

Is yet so distant, though in sooth it were
Down in the ocean's deepest gulf to dwell,

As now from me she soar'd, but still most fair.

“Lady, in whom my hope doth bloom so well,

And who for my salvation wast content

To leave thy footprints on the shores of Hell,

For all the wonders, 'mong which I have bent

My steps, I here acknowledge in this hour

The grace and virtue with thy goodness blent.

Thou hast from servitude most sad and sore

Brought me unto a land of liberty,

By every means of which thou hadst the power.

Thy marvellous gifts do thou preserve in me,

That still my spirit, which thou hast made whole,

Freed from the flesh be pleasing unto thee.”

Even thus I pray'd ; and Beatrice, whose soul

Look'd downward, smiling, from her distant home,

Turn'd to the fount whence living waters roll.

Then spake the holy Sage : “That thou may'st roam

No more, but fully reach thy journey's end,

To aid which, prayer and love have bade me come,

Around this garden let thy glances wend ;

For, gazing there, the pathway thou shalt know,

Whereby to light divine thou may'st ascend.

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And the bright Queen of Heaven, for whom I glow 100
 Wholly with love, because for evermore
 I am her faithful Bernard, shall bestow

On us all grace.” As he who from the shore,
 Perchance, of far Croatia, comes to gaze
 On our Veronica, whose fame of yore 105

Intently fills his heart, the while he says :
 “ My Saviour Jesus Christ ! O God most true !
 In very deed dost thou thine aspect raise

Before mine eyes ? ” thus was I, when I knew
 His living charity, who, on this earth,
 His peace, of old, from contemplation drew. 110

“ O son of grace, this land of joyous mirth,”
 He said, “ thou ne’er canst know, while yet thine eyes
 See but the lower grades, of lesser worth ;

But let them to the further bounds arise, 115
 Until they see the Queen, ’neath whom this bourne
 In true and loyal obedience ever lies.”

I raised my glance ; and as, at dawn of morn,
 The gorgeous flashing of the orient heaven
 Conquers the hue that in the west is worn, 120
 Now, while mine eyes were to the mountains driven

From the low valley, on the verge afar
Light I beheld with which had vainly striven
 All else around. And, even as when the Car
Which Phaëton so ill did guide draws nigh, 125
The radiance brightens, dimming every star,
 Thus did that peaceful oriflamme on high
Glow in the midst, with pure and living light ;
Elsewhere the rays did seem to fade and die.
 And round the midst, with pinions spread for flight, 130
A thousand angels I beheld and more,
Rejoicing ; each of diverse sheen and might :
 And in their dances and their song they wore
A smile of beauty, which bright joyance shed
On all the saints of the celestial shore. 135
 If o'er my speech such ample wealth were spread
As Fancy doth possess, that sweet content
Must yet by me be evermore unsaid.
 Then Bernard, as he saw my eyes intent
With fixéd gaze upon this burning glow, 140
His own with such deep love towards her bent,
That mine a yet more longing eagerness did know.

CANTO XXXII.

Argument.

St. Bernard shows Dante the Saints of the Old and New Testament.

GAZING on that wherein his soul did take
Such deep delight, the Sage now freely there
Assumed the teacher's office, and thus spake
These holy words : “She whom thou seest so fair,
At Mary's feet, did open first the wound
By the Maid-mother heal'd. And seated, where
Rises the third great circle of this bound,
Beneath is Rachel, as thou well may'st see,
With Beatrice, in like gradation found.
Sarah, Rebecca, Judith too, and she,
The ancestress of him who, for the grief
Of guiltiness, sang *Misererē mei*,

Are here beheld, as in my accents brief
 I show by name, while here I downward go,
 Along this fairest rose, from leaf to leaf.

15

From the seventh grade, both higher and more low,
 The Hebrew maids and matrons do abide,
 Parting the petals of this flower. And know,

As is the look whereby their faith descried
 The Christ, they on this wise the wall do build
 From whence the sacred staircase doth divide.

20

On this side, where the flower is wholly fill'd
 With leaves, are those who, in the days of old,
 Believed in Christ, not yet on earth reveal'd.

And where the semicircle doth enfold
 Some vacant spots, those spirits dwell, whose eyes
 By faith a risen Saviour did behold.

25

As, here, the bright and glorious throne doth rise
 Of her, the Lady of the heavenly spheres,
 And all those others, which, in lowlier guise,

30

The ranks divide ; thus, opposite, appears
 The ever holy Baptist, who the lone
 Desert, and martyrdom, and two long years
 Of Hades bore. And 'neath his feet are shown

Augustine, Francis, and St. Benedict,
And others, downward still from zone to zone.

Here unto God's high works thine eyes direct ;
Because both aspects of the Faith do fill
This garden equally. Thine intellect
Should know that those beneath the grade which
still

In midst doth sever the two companies,
Had never merit in their proper will,

But only an imputed righteousness ;
For all those spirits were absolvëd, ere
They could have true election. And of this

Thou may'st be certain by the mien they wear,
And by their childish voices ; if thou seek
To see them plainly, and their accents hear.

Now dost thou doubt ; and, doubting, dost not
speak :

But I will loose the cord which binds thy thought,
Too subtle for thy vision dim and weak.

Ne'er in this realm's great amplitude ye aught
Of casual or uncertain may descry ;
As hunger, thirst, and sorrow enter not.

For, 'stablished evermore within the sky, 55

Is the eternal law that all things here,

As ring unto the finger, do reply :

And thus those souls (so early to the sphere
Of the true life upborne), not without cause,
Of less and greater excellence appear. 60

The Sovereign, at whose word this realm doth pause
In such deep love and marvellous delight,
That never Will might soar to higher laws,

Created all things, in his smile of light,
And at his pleasure grace doth o'er them breathe 65
Diversely : the result to know aright

Here must suffice. And Holy Scripture hath
This clearly noted of those Twins, who e'en
Within their mother's womb erst strove in wrath.

Thus, as your locks of different hues are seen, 70
The light of grace a crown doth ever weave,
Most suited to each diverse brow, I ween.

And, without merit, do those souls receive
Their meed of glory, in a diverse grade,
Yet diff'rent but as they its rays perceive, 75

By ante-natal gift. In days long fled,

To save an infant and yet stainless soul
Sufficed the faith within its parents stay'd.

And when those early ages ceased to roll,
That each man-child might soar on sinless plume,
The rite of circumcision did for all

Avail. But when the time of grace was come,
If not most perfectly baptised in Christ,
Such innocence in Hades had its doom.

Look now within the face which unto Christ
Doth most resemble ; for its clearest light
Alone can fit thine eyes to look on Christ."

O'er her I saw a shower of gladness bright,
Borne downwards by those holy ones which be
Created for this high and glorious flight.

From all the things which I till now did see,
My soul did less of wond'ring marvel wear,
Nor was God's semblance made so clear to me.

The angel-form who first descended there,
"Ave, Maria, gratia plena" sang
Before her, with his wings in the still air
Extended. And on every side there rang
The echo unto that divinest lore,

Fron all the Heavenly Court, while gladness sprang

Serener on each brow. I spake once more : 100

“O holy father, who dost bear for me

To leave thy dwelling on the joyous shore

Appointed for thy home, say, who may be

Yon angel in whose eyes such love doth burn

Toward our Queen, that I his form do see 105

As living fire ?” And, eager, did I turn

To him whose light from Mary’s rays did flow,

As by the sun doth shine the star of morn.

And he to me : “ Both strength and beauty glow

In him with a more full and ample store 110

Than elsewhere ye in man or angel know.

And it is well ; for he to Mary bore

The palm, what time the Son of God came down,

To bear the burden of our flesh, of yore.

But lift thou up thine eyes (the while are shown 115

These things by my discourse), and let them rest

On the patricians near this righteous throne.

The twain who sit on high, most richly blest,

May of this flower be deem’d the double root,

Those who are nighest to our Queen august. 120

Lo ! on the left, most near unto the foot
Of Mary's throne, the Father, for whose dire
Bold gluttony we taste such bitter fruit :

And, on her right, the venerable sire
Of Holy Church, to whom Christ did confide
The keys of this sweet rose. He who the ire

And sorrow which should grieve the beauteous bride,
Won by the spear and nails, did with his eyne
Behold in mystic vision, ere he died,

Is with him. Near the parent of our line,
Thou seest the Leader who with manna fed
A people ingrate, fickle, and malign.

And nigh St. Peter, there, is Anna stay'd,
To gaze upon her daughter so content,
That ne'er from thence her loving eyes have sped,

Though with Hosannas still her voice is blent :
And, opposite the sire of many a son,
Doth sit Lucia, who thy Lady sent,

When thou, bent downwards low, wast nigh undone.
But since thy yet remaining time doth fly,
Here let us stop, as one who makes the gown
In measure of his cloth. Then raise thine eye

125

130

135

140

To Primal Love, that thou its inner cell
Of lightning-glory, far as it doth lie

In mortal power, may'st enter now and dwell 145
Therein. And lest thou move on backward wing,
Still deeming thou speed'st onward, it is well
To beg for aid from her whence aye doth spring
Such grace : then do thou heedfully prepare
With all thy heart unto my words to cling." 150

Thus did he speak ; and now began this holy prayer.

CANTO XXXIII.

Argument.

St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin.—Dante beholds the unveiled glory of God : there, his human strength fails, and the Vision ends.

“ O VIRGIN Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Most lowly and most lofty being e'er
Created, scope of all that hath been done

In God's eternal counsel ! thou such fair
Nobility didst on our nature shower,
That he who made it did that nature wear.

Within thy womb the love was lit once more,
By whose warm glow in peace eternal thus
Hath sprung and blossomëd this fairest flower.

Here art thou as the noonday sun to us,
Of charity, as on the mortal earth,
The living fountain of all hope, I wis.

Lady, thou art of such a lofty worth,
 That he who seeketh grace, nor asks of thee,
 Would, without wings, to his desire go forth,

15

In airy flight. Thy great benignity
 Not only succours him who asks, but e'en,
 Ere the request, doth give with bounty free.

In thee for aye is gentlest pity seen,
 In thee magnificence, in thee all good
 That in created being e'er hath been.

20

This man who, from the lowest deep where brood
 The lost for evermore, unto the bright
 And blissful land hath still his course pursued,

While, one by one, hath pass'd before his sight
 Each spirit-life, now begs of thee such grace
 That he may raise his eyne on bolder flight,

25

To the Supreme Salvation's lofty place :
 And I, who ne'er more ardently did burn
 For mine own vision's fullest perfectness,

30

Than now for his, to thee do wholly turn,
 And pray that by thy prayers thou would'st make clean
 His heart ; thus heavenly joy he may discern.

And further still, I beg of thee, O Queen,

Who canst whate'er thou wilt, that thou would'st free 35
His spirit, which such wondrous things hath seen,

From every stain. His guardian do thou be,
From impulses of earth : thy gaze now rest
On Beatrice, whose clasp'd hands for me
Entreat, with all the band of spirits blest." 40

Intent on him who pray'd did now appear
The eyes so loved by God ; and thus exprest
How prayer devout and pure on high is dear :
Then to the light eternal did they soar,
Wherein none other hath such insight clear ; 45
And I, who had attain'd the furthest shore,
Where all desire is ended, now at last
My deep and ancient longing felt no more.

The Sage then, smiling, sign'd that I should cast
Mine eyes above ; but I already knew 50
This lesson, and on high my glance had pass'd.

For clearer and more clear mine insight grew,
And more and more it enter'd the bright ray
Of that pure light which in itself is true.

From henceforth was my vision more than may
Be told in speech, which all too weak I deem ; 55

And Memory shrinketh from that task away.

Even as the man who seëth in a dream,
And, when he wakes, the passion doth remain,
Though of the rest abides no faintest gleam ; 60

Thus am I now, who scarcely do retain
Aught of the vision which on high was mine :
Yet on my heart still drops its sweetest rain.

Thus melts the snow-flake when the sun doth shine ;
Thus on the wind were scatter'd the light leaves, 65
Which bore, of old, the sentence Sibylline.

O highest Light ! whose purity bereaves
Of power all mortal vision, to my mind
Give back a ray of what it there receives,

And grant my speech such wondrous power to find, 70
That of thy glory I one spark alone
May leave to future races of mankind :

For, could I bring again the memories gone,
And somewhat sing of them in this my strain,
More of thy victory on earth were known. 75

I think, if now mine eye from this sharp pain
Had shrunk, so 'wilder'd I had surely been
That ne'er might I have look'd thereon again :

And, for this thought I was more bold, the keen
Resplendence to endure, until my gaze
Was join'd unto the pure and dazzling sheen

80
Of Virtue Infinite. O ample grace,
Whence I presumed to lift my glance on high
Unto that glory's fierce and burning blaze !

85
And, in its far and holy depths, mine eye
Saw, bound with love as in one volume fair,
All that within the universe doth lie :

Substance, and accident ; the things they bear,
Thereto pertaining, closely join'd I saw,
Thus but one simple light. The germ was there

90
Of the great universal type and law,
Methinks ; because when this I do recall,
I seem a fuller, freer breath to draw.

95
But more forgetfulness on me doth fall
Here in one moment, than in all the space
Of twenty centuries and five, which roll

Between the Present and the ancient days
When on the foam the shadow Argo threw,
The sea-god first beheld with wond'ring gaze.

100
Now marvel all my mind enchainëd drew,

Most fix'dly and immoveably intent,
And, looking, ever yet more ardent grew.

For, when the spirit on God's light is bent,
From thence to aught besides it cannot turn,
Since Will, in sooth, thereto may ne'er consent ;

105

Because the Good for which it aye doth burn,
Most wholly garner'd in that Light doth rest :
All is defective which within this urn

Is not made perfect. Now shall be exprest
My thought in words which more unfinish'd die
Than his who hangs upon his mother's breast.

110

Not that within this living light did lie
More than one simple essence ; for it still
Remaineth that which it hath been for aye ;

Yet, as more strength did o'er my gaze distil,
To me the self-same semblance did appear
As though it did another form fulfil.

115

For now, within the substance deep and clear
Of that high Light, I look'd on circles three,
And diverse was the hue which they did wear,

120

Though all of equal space and measure be :
And each, as Iris doth from Iris glow,

Gave back reflected rays ; while unto me

The third appear'd as fire, in equal flow
From this side and from that. How brief is speech, 125
The marvels which I here beheld, to show !

In truth, I am too weak this lore to teach.

O Light Eternal, who alone dost dwell
In thine own being ; who alone canst reach
To comprehend thyself ; from whose deep cell, 130
Thou, Understood and Understanding, aye
Smil'st on thyself with love ! The zone which well

As a reflected light I did descry,
When I thereon had gazed awhile, I saw
Most wholly painted with our effigy,

Still in that ray's own hue : thus did it draw
My gaze unto itself. As one whose mind
Intently seeks by geometric law

To square the circle ; yet he cannot find,
In thought, the principle which he doth need : 140
Thus I at this new sight ; who here inclined

Mine intellect, within this zone to read
The how and whence that image there did dwell,
And in what manner it therewith agreed.

But, weary, now my mortal pinions fell ; 145
I do but know there flash'd a 'wilderling light
O'er me, of perfect joy made visible.

At this high glory fail'd mine earthly might :
But yet no discontent my bliss did mar,
Impell'd, as speeds a circling wheel aright, 150
Even by the Love which moves the sun and every
star.

NOTES.

CANTO I.

V. 16, 17.—“*Till now, one summit of Parnassus' hill Sufficed;*”

Mount Parnassus has two summits. One was sacred to Apollo, and on it stood Delphi; on the other, Nysa, was the temple of Bacchus. Hitherto, Dante had not invoked Apollo: in the beginning of the Purgatorio, he begs the aid of the Muses, and especially of Calliope; while the Inferno has no invocation whatever. Commentators have been perplexed by the mention of the double summit in this passage; as Bacchus, at first sight, does not appear to have much to do with the subject. But he was the patron of Comedy: here used, not in the modern sense, as something mirthful and ludicrous; but, in its old meaning, simply the reverse of Tragedy, that is, a narrative which ends happily.

V. 33.—“*His brows with leaves Peneian garlandeth.*”

Laurel leaves, called *Peneian*, because Daphne was changed into a laurel on the banks of the Peneus. This river rises on Mount Pindus, and flows between Ossa and Olympus, through

the vale of Tempe. It received its name from Peneus, a son of Oceanus and Tethys. In ancient days, it inundated the plains of Thessaly, till an earthquake rent Ossa from Olympus, and formed the vale of Tempe. The fable of Daphne probably arose from the laurels which grew abundantly on the banks of the river.

V. 36. — “*and Cyrrha shall reply again.*”

A city at the foot of Parnassus, and also dedicated to Apollo.

V. 37, 38.—“*By diverse gates doth mortal vision see
The lamp arise which lights the world from far;*”

The sun, rising at different parts of the horizon, as the seasons change.

V. 39.—“*But with four circles joined, and crosses three,*” &c.

In the beginning of Aries and of Libra, that is, at the vernal and autumnal equinox, four circles of the sphere, intersecting each other, form three crosses. The equinoctial colure cuts the equator, and forms one cross; the ecliptic, also, cuts the equator, and forms another; the horizon and ecliptic form a third. Thus Dante here says that the sun was rising near the first point in Aries. Commentators are divided as to the meaning of the “happier star,” mentioned in the following verse. Some understand it to be the planet Venus, the star of dawn. Others suppose it to be the sun, and consider that Dante simply meant an allusion to the season of spring. But probably there is also here an astrological signification; as Aries and Libra, being nearer to the equator, were believed to have a happier influence than the other signs of the zodiac. Dante himself alludes to this in one of his other works.

V. 43, 44.—“*And thus 'twas morning there, while here the eve
Drew near,*”

That is, morning in Paradise, and evening on earth.

V. 68, 69.—“*As Glaucus, tasting of the herb which made
Him consort of the Gods within the sea.*”

Glaucus, a fisherman of Anthedon, the Boeotian City of Flowers. He observed, one day, that all the fishes which he laid on the grass received fresh life as they touched the ground, and immediately sprang again into the sea. Supposing this might proceed from some virtue in the grass, he tasted it, and suddenly, feeling an irresistible longing for the dim ocean-depths, he plunged into the waves, and was changed into a sea-god by Oceanus and Tethys.

V. 74, 75.—“*If I were only what thou didst create
Most lately,*”

The body is first created, then the soul ; thus Dante here says that, like St. Paul, he knew not whether he ascended into the celestial spheres in the body, or out of the body.

V. 123, 124.—“*Aye stills the heaven wherein is the abode
Of that which swiftest speeds.*”

The Empyrean ; which, according to Dante's system, contains the Primum Mobile, the crystalline sphere of most rapid motion. Dante supposes the existence of ten heavens, in the following order : the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Sphere of the Fixed Stars, the Primum Mobile, and the Empyrean. Beyond the tenth heaven is the unveiled glory of God.

CANTO II.

V. 10.—“*And Muses nine point out the polar star.*”

Some editions have *nuove, new*, instead of *nove, nine*; but the latter reading seems the best. Dante is supposed to allude here to the nine sciences, and to the nine heavens, which lead to the polar star of the human soul; that is, to God.

V. 16-18. — “*The glorious race
Who pass'd by Colchis, when they did discern
Jason's strange husbandry,*”

The Argonauts, when Jason, in order to win the golden fleece, ploughed with the fire-breathing bulls, and sowed the serpents' teeth.

V. 30.—“*Which hath conjoin'd us thus to the first star.*”

The Moon, to which Dante and Beatrice have now ascended.

V. 45.—“*Like the primeval truth man doth believe.*”

Intuition; which, according to Plato, is the highest of the four principles of knowledge in the human soul: the second being demonstration by reasoning; the third, belief on testimony; and the fourth and lowest, conjecture, or probability.

V. 49-51. — “*what the traces are, which seem
To cloud this substance, and on earth below
Of Cain make men discourse in legends dim.*”

The spots in the moon; in those days, popularly believed to be the face of Cain.

V. 70, 71. — “*Diverse virtues must be known
As fruits of formal principles;*”

Dante here uses the language of the Schoolmen : by *virtues* are meant *influences*; by *formal principles*, that inherent quality which causes *matter* to assume *form*.

V. 94-96. — “*Experience an answer may impart
To this objection ; if thou seek to prove
Which ever is the fountain of your Art.*”

Aristotle says that from sense is born memory ; from many memories, experience ; and from many experiences, Art.

V. 112. — “*the heaven of peace divine,*”

The Empyrean, motionless sphere of celestial fire.

V. 113, 114.—“*A firmament within whose virtue lies
The essence of all things it doth inurn.*”

The Primum Mobile, whose motion guides all the other spheres.

V. 115.—“*And the next heaven, which hath so many eyes,*”

The sphere of the fixed stars.

V. 129.—“*By the blest Motive Spirits must respire.*”

By the guiding care of the angelic hierarchy.

V. 139, 140.—“*Each diverse virtue differently is found
Join'd with the precious form it vivifies,*”

The different virtues, or influences, which proceed from the Angel Guides, produce different effects in each of the stars, “the precious forms,” to which they give motion and life.

CANTO III.

V. 1.—“*That Sun, which first had warm'd my heart with love.*”

Beatrice.

V. 17, 18.

————— “*error, contrary
To that which love 'twixt man and fount did light,*”

The error of Narcissus, who, gazing in a fountain, believed his own image to be a water-nymph : Dante, on the contrary, mistook the true for reflected forms ; and looked behind him, to see those whom he supposed to be here mirrored.

V. 49, 50.

————— “*I who here do rest,
Was once Piccarda ;*”

Piccarda was daughter of Simone Donati ; and sister of the haughty, violent Corse Donati, and the amiable, but indolent Forese, whom we have already met among the gluttonous, in Purgatory. Piccarda and Forese were the early playfellows of Dante Alighieri and Beatrice Portinari. From childhood, Piccarda's heart was in the cloister, and, at a suitable age (in 1287), she took the veil in the convent of St. Clare in Florence, during her brother Corso's temporary absence. He had however intended to strengthen himself by an alliance with Roselino della Tosa ; and, furious at being thus foiled, he, with twelve bandits, scaled the walls of the convent, and carried her off, by force, to his own house. There he obliged her to resume a secular dress, and to marry the above-mentioned Roselino della Tosa.

Some writers go on to assert that, in answer to her prayers,

she was immediately smitten with a horrible leprosy, and died a few days after. Other and better authenticated accounts say that she pined away and died of grief at being compelled to break her vows. All are agreed, however, in stating that she died young.

Some authorities, and among them Balbo, give the name of Piccarda's husband as Della Rosa, instead of Della Tosa ; but the latter seems the more probable, as an alliance with the Della Tosa family must indeed have been an object of ambition, even to the powerful Corso Donati ; and, otherwise, it is difficult to imagine what motive he could have had for so daring an outrage. Rosso della Tosa was chief of the popular party in Florence, as Corso Donati was of the patricians.

Piccarda has sometimes been represented as the sister of Gemma Donati, Dante's wife ; but Gemma was daughter of Manetto, the brother of Simone Donati, Piccarda's father : consequently Piccarda and Gemma were cousins.

V. 97.—“*A Lady dwelleth in a loftier bourne,*”

St. Clare, born at Assisi, in 1193, of noble and wealthy parents. She founded, under the direction of her fellow-citizen St. Francis, an Order of Nuns, with an extremely severe rule, which was afterwards widely diffused. She died in 1253, and was canonized in 1255 by Pope Alexander IV. Her community practised austeries which, till then, had been unknown in convents of nuns. They wore neither stockings, shoes, sandals, nor any other covering on their feet ; they slept on the bare ground, observed a perpetual abstinence, and never spoke but when they were obliged to do so by some indispensable duty of necessity or charity. St. Clare herself always wore next her skin a rough garment of horsehair or of hog's bristles cut

short ; she fasted on the vigils of the church and all Lent, on bread and water ; and on the Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays of Lent ate nothing at all. She sometimes strewed the ground on which she lay with twigs, having a log of wood for a pillow. Gregory IX. offered to absolv^s her from her vow of poverty ; but she replied, “I will ask absolution for my sins, not for the inspirations of Christ.” It is said that, when she died, her soul was visibly received by angels.

The nuns of her rule are sometimes called Poor Ladies, or Poor Clares. Only the stricter communities of her order are so called however : the others, who obtained leave from Urban IV. to enjoy settled revenues, are called Urbanists. Of these latter was the chief house of the Clares in England. It stood near Aldgate ; and was built by Blanche, queen of Navarre, and her husband Edmund, earl of Lancaster, Leicester, and Derby, son of Henry III. and brother of Edward I. These nuns were called Minoresses, and their house the Minories.

V. 118. —— “*the great Constance dwells within that light ;*”

The Empress Constance, born 1154, daughter of Roger, king of Sicily and Apulia. According to most historians, she took the veil in a convent of Palermo. On the death of her nephew, William II., without issue, Tancred took possession of the kingdom ; but, as he refused to be controlled by the Church, the Archbishop of Palermo took Constance from her convent, and married her (in 1186) to Henry, son of Barbarossa. She was the mother of Frederick II., and thus the kingdoms of Sicily and Apulia passed to the house of Suabia.

V. 119.—“*The third and last of Suabia’s race*”

This “third and last of Suabia’s race” is Frederick II., the last German Emperor of the house of Suabia. He was born in

1194, in the March of Ancona, and was thus Italian by birth as well as by character. It was at his court that the Italian language first rose above the corrupt Latin, or rather *patois* then in common use throughout Italy ; and from his time, indeed, Italian was called “*lingua cortigiana*,” or “*courtly language*.” Sismondi says of him, “he encouraged the first poets who employed it” (the Italian tongue) “at his court, and he himself made verses ; he loved literature and encouraged learning ; he founded schools and universities ; he promoted distinguished men ; he spoke with equal facility Italian, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Arabic ; he had the intellectual suppleness and finesse peculiar to the men of the south, the art of pleasing, a taste for philosophy, and a great independence of opinion, with a leaning to infidelity : hence he is accused of having written a book against the three revelations, of Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet, entitled ‘*De Tribus Impostoribus*.’” It would appear, however, that nobody ever saw this obnoxious work ; so it did not do much mischief : if, indeed, it ever existed, which is more than doubtful. In his leisure hours, Greek and Arabic Manuscripts were his favourite study ; and he even translated some of Aristotle. He undertook a Crusade ; but in the course of it, was excommunicated several times : first, for falling ill, and thereby delaying his departure for the Holy Land ; and, secondly, for recovering Jerusalem by treaty, instead of exterminating the unbelievers. Yet he had no lack of warlike spirit, as the annals of his reign testify : but this monarch, troubadour, philosopher, soldier and statesman was always looked upon with suspicion, to use the very mildest term, by the partisans of the Papal See ; indeed, some of them went so far as to pronounce him to be Antichrist, the belief being current in the Middle Ages that Antichrist was to be born of an old nun. However, some authorities state that the Empress

Constance had never actually taken the vows, but only resided in the convent.

Her gifted, but somewhat graceless son died December 13, 1250, at Castel Fiorentino, in the Neapolitan territory. He was in truth the last sovereign of his race ; for his son Conrad, though elected emperor, never really reigned ; and his grandson, the young Conradin, met his bloody fate at the age of sixteen.

V. 120. — “*the second Stor,nwind's might.*”

Henry VI. of Germany, father of Frederick II. I have here translated *vento* as *stormwind* ; that appearing to be the signification adopted by most commentators. The decision, to that effect, of Pietro di Dante would of course be sufficient of itself, if it were absolutely certain that the commentary which bears his name was really written by the son of Dante. But, though not absolutely certain, the great mass of evidence seems in favour of its being so ; although Tiraboschi inclines to the contrary opinion. Some commentators consider *vento* to signify *venuto* ; thus “*il secondo vento*” would simply mean “he who came second.” Others have understood it as *vanto*, *glory* ; but the common reading of *wind* for *vento* is on the whole the best supported.

CANTO IV.

V. 23, 24.—“*Deeming the soul returns unto the stars,
According to the lore that Plato taught.*”

According to Plato, in the Timæus, the souls of men and the stars of heaven were originally created in equal numbers. After

each soul has dwelt some time in its associate star, where he supposes it to acquire those primal ideas which we call *innate*, the gods cause it to be born on earth, in the body of man. The subsequent fate of this complex being, with his body woven of the four elements, and his soul descended from the stars, depends upon his own conduct while on earth. If he lives virtuously and philosophically, the soul, when the body is once more dissolved into the elements, will return to its own primeval star, and there live a life of pure intellectual happiness. If he lives weakly, but not wickedly, the soul will again be born as a woman ; but if he have lived in actual wickedness, it will take the shape of whatever animal is most akin in habits to the peculiar kind of sin he has indulged in : for instance, the glutton will live again as a hog, the deceiver as a fox, &c.

At the time of Dante, there were two principal commentaries of the *Timaeus* : one, by Chalcidius, employed with favour in scholastic instruction ; the other by St. Thomas Aquinas, and now lost. It is probable that Dante had seen both these works ; and, though some have doubted his knowledge of Greek, it is evident that, whether in the original or in translations, he had studied Plato till his whole mind was deeply imbued with the doctrines of the Athenian Sage. The system of the celestial spheres is nearly the same ; as also the general style of the discussions and arguments : and, indeed, the first idea of a journey among the Dead was, as far as I am aware, originally Plato's. Virgil borrowed it of him : then came the host of monkish legends of the Middle Ages ; the Purgatory of St. Patrick, the Voyage of St. Brendan, the Descent of St. Paul into Hell, the Vision of Alberic, and many others. Last of all, just as the dim moonlight of the Middle Ages was passing away before the dawn of modern times, came Dante Alighieri.

But Plato was the first (unless, indeed, he followed the legend

of Pythagoras) : he tells, in the Tenth Book of his Republic, of Erus the son of Armenius, that, "happening on a time to die in battle, when the dead were on the tenth day carried off, already corrupted, he was taken up sound ; and being carried home, as he was about to be buried on the twelfth day, when laid on the funeral pile, revived ; and being revived, he told what he saw in the other state, and said, that after his soul left the body, it went with many others, and that they came to a certain mysterious, hallowed place, where there were two chasms in the earth, near to each other, and two other openings in the heavens opposite to them, and that the judges sat between these ;—that when they gave judgment, they commanded the just to go on the right hand, and upwards through the heaven, having fitted marks on the front of those that had been judged ; but the unjust they commanded to the left, and downwards, and these likewise had behind them marks of all that they had done. But when he came before the judges, they said he ought to be a messenger to men concerning things there, and they commanded him to hear, and contemplate everything therein ;—and that he saw there, through two openings, one of the heaven, and one of the earth, the souls departing, after they were there judged ; and through the other two openings he saw, rising from the one out of the earth, souls full of squalidness and dust ; and from the other, he saw other souls descending pure from heaven ; and that on their arrival from time to time they seemed as if they came from a long journey, and that they gladly went to rest themselves in the meadow, as in a public assembly, and such as were acquainted saluted each other, and those who rose out of the earth asked the others concerning the things above, and those from heaven asked them concerning the things below, and that they told one another : those weeping and wailing whilst they called to mind what and how many

things they suffered and saw in their journey under the earth (for it was a journey of a thousand years); and that these again from heaven explained their enjoyments, and spectacles of amazing beauty." Here seems to be the germ of the Divine Comedy.

V. 35.—"But all the primal zone do beautify,"

Beatrice here explains that, though the souls of the Blessed are shown to Dante in the different spheres, they really all inhabit the same zone, that is, the Empyrean; thus the lesser are not shut out from communion with the greater, nor from the vision of God.

V. 84.—"And Mutius, stern to his own hand,"

When Lars Porsena besieged Rome, with the intention of reinstating the Tarquins, Mutius resolved to rid his country, with one blow, of so dangerous an enemy. He accordingly disguised himself as an Etrusean; and, as he could speak the language fluently, he easily introduced himself into the camp, and finally into the royal tent. Porsena sat alone with his secretary when Mutius entered. The latter immediately rushed upon the secretary, and stabbed him to the heart, mistaking him for his royal master. Mutius was seized; and, to show his determination, thrust his right hand into the fire. Porsena, struck with his firmness, generously pardoned him, made peace with the Romans, and never afterwards supported the Tarquins. Mutius, from that time, was called *Scævola*, or *left-handed*. There is a very fine picture, by Guercino, in the Pallavicini palace, in Genoa, representing the incident here alluded to.

V. 103.—“*Even as Alcmaeon, by his sire besought,
Slew his own mother;*”

Alcmaeon, son of the soothsaying king Amphiaraus and Eriphyle. When Amphiaraus concealed himself in order to avoid accompanying the Argives in their expedition against Thebes, his wife, bribed by a gold necklace, betrayed him. He therefore commanded his son to avenge him. (*See note to Purgatorio, Canto XII. v. 50.*)

CANTO V.

V. 70.—“*The mighty leader of the Greeks, of old;*”

Agamemnon, who sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia, to propitiate the gods, in Aulis.

V. 71, 72.—“*Whence, for her beauty, by the salt sea-wave,
Iphigenia mourn'd;*”

Iphigenia was doomed, because Agamemnon, when he first began to prepare for the expedition against Troy, vowed to sacrifice to Diana the fairest thing which should be born to him that year.

V. 87.—“*To where the world hath most of life and light.*”

Towards the sun.

V. 92.—“*Thus to the second realm we soared aright.*”

To the sphere of Mercury. This, as the smallest of the planets, was compared, in the scholastic parallel drawn between

the spheres and the sciences, to Dialectics, the narrowest science of all.

V. 122.—“*From one of those blest spirits this I heard,*”
From the Emperor Justinian, who has now spoken.

CANTO VI.

V. 1, 2.—“*When Constantine had turn'd the eagle's flight
Against the course of heaven, which erst it bore.*”

By transferring the seat of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople, and thus making the Roman eagles pass from west to east, instead of going, like the sun, from east to west, as they had done when Æneas came from Troy to Italy. Dante is here mistaken in supposing that the early victories of Rome were won beneath the eagles. They were first adopted as the Roman standard by Marius; and in his days were of silver, sometimes holding a thunderbolt. Previously, the standard had been often changed. In ancient times, it was a wolf, in honour of Romulus; afterwards, a hog, because that animal was generally sacrificed at the conclusion of a treaty; thus indicating that war is undertaken in order to obtain peace. A minotaur was sometimes used, in allusion to the labyrinth; thus intimating the secrecy with which the general was to act. Sometimes a horse or a boar was the ensign. But from the time of Marius, the eagle was the standard of Rome, though Trajan made use of the dragon.

V. 4-6.—“*A hundred and a hundred years and more,
On Europe’s verge the bird of God was stay’d,
Near to the mountains whence it came, of yore.*”

About two hundred years had elapsed (that is, from A.D. 328 till A.D. 527) from the time when Constantine transferred the empire to Byzantium, until the accession of Justinian; but Dante seems to have supposed the interval rather longer. He calls the Roman eagle “the bird of God,” instead of the bird of Jove, because he considered the Imperial dignity to be decreed by God. This will hereafter be more fully seen, when he ascends into the sphere of Jupiter.

V. 12.—“*To purge the laws’ vain superfluity.*”

Justinian, as is well known, reformed and re-arranged the Roman laws. He reduced them to fifty books; whereas, from their great verbosity, there had been formerly about ten thousand!

V. 14.—“*In Christ of but one nature did I ween,*”

Justinian is said to have been a follower of the heretical opinions held by Eutyches, who taught that in Christ there was but one nature. Some authorities state, however, that he was not himself heretical, but merely supported in office a Patriarch who was so. But Paulus Diaconus says, “When Theodatus” (king of the Goths in Italy) “perceived that the Emperor was incensed against him, he sent to Constantinople the blessed Pope Agapetus to obtain for him, from Justinian, that his acts might be unpunished. When this holy pontiff had been admitted to Justinian’s presence, and had held a conference with him on the faith, he found him to have fallen into the dogmas of Eutyches; and the blessed Vicar of Christ met at first with

some grievous threats from him. But when Justinian had perceived his unshaken constancy in the Catholic faith (and it seems their dispute rose to such a height that the Head of the Church said 'I desired to approach Justinian, the most Christian Emperor, but I have found here Diocletian,') and had at last by the will of God yielded to his admonitions, he returned to the confession of the Catholic faith, with many who had similarly erred. And having convicted Anthemius, the bishop of that same royal city, a champion of the above mentioned heresy, Agapetus deprived him of public communion, and sent him, with the sanction of the Emperor, into exile."

V. 35, 36. — "since Pallas died

That through long ages might endure its reign."

Pallas, not the Goddess of Wisdom, but the son of Evander, King of Latium. He was sent with some troops to assist Æneas, and was killed by Turnus, King of the Rutuli.

V. 39.—"When three with three the battle for it tried."

The Roman Horatii and the Alban Curiatii. Dante seems to have considered that they fought on the principle of the decision by combat, of the Middle Ages, thus directly appealing to the judgment of God.

V. 46.—"To Quintus, named from his neglected hair,"

Quintus, or Quinctius, surnamed Cincinnatus.

V. 47, 48.—"To Decii, and to Fabii, and to him,
Torquatus hight,"

The Decii, one of the most celebrated of the Roman families for deeds of noble daring. Decius Mus, in a battle with the

Latins, b.c. 338, rushed into the thickest of the enemy, devoting himself to the gods. His son Decius did the same, when fighting against the Gauls and Samnites, b.c. 296. His grandson also did the same, in the war against Pyrrhus and the Tarentines, b.c. 280.

The Fabii, a noble and wealthy family of Rome, were once so numerous that they took upon themselves to wage war against the inhabitants of Veii ; but, in a general engagement near the Cremera, the whole family, consisting of three hundred and six men, were slain, b.c. 477. There remained only one, who, on account of his youth, had remained in Rome, and from him arose the noble Fabii in the following ages. Their great deeds are mentioned in almost every page of the Roman annals. Among them was Fabius Rullianus, who received the surname of *Maximus*, because he had lessened the power of the populace at elections. He commanded the Roman cavalry, and his victory over the Samnites in that capacity nearly cost him his life, because he engaged the enemy without the orders of the dictator. He was five times consul, twice dictator, and once censor ; and triumphed over seven different nations in the neighbourhood of Rome. Another of the same noble house won Thrasymene. He it was who was surnamed *Cunctator* or *Delay*er, because he delayed the army of Hannibal with marches and countermarches. He was not less remarkable for honesty than for military skill ; for, when the agreement he had made with Hannibal for the ransom of the captives was disowned by the Roman Senate, he sold all his estates to pay the money, rather than break his word. He lived a hundred years, was five times consul, and twice honoured with a triumph.

The Torquatus here mentioned is Manlius, surnamed Torquatus, because, having vanquished a gigantic Gaul in single combat, he took from him the collar (*torquis*) which he wore

round his neck. This is that Manlius who, when his own son had engaged the enemy without previous permission, condemned him to death, although he had obtained an honourable victory.

V. 53, 54. — “*to a mount anear thy home
It seem'd with bitter cruelty imbued.*”

To the hill of Fiesole, sacked by the Romans, after Pompey had there besieged Catiline, and taken the city. Florence was afterwards built in the valley, to replace it.

V. 55, 56.—“*And when the time ordain'd of Heaven had come,
That in its mode serene all earth were still'd,*”

When the time of our Saviour's birth drew near, all the earth was to be at peace.

V. 60.—“*And every valley whence the Rhone is fill'd.*”

To this day, in the tributary valleys of the Rhone there are traces of the conquests of Julius Cæsar. In Canton Valais, Switzerland, some of his legions remained as colonists ; and one is startled by meeting the dark, flashing eyes, black hair, and brilliant smile of the South, instead of the sandy complexion and snub noses of the Swiss. At Champéry, in particular, at the foot of the Dent du Midi, one might believe oneself to be in the Roman Campagna, as far as the personal appearance of the peasants is concerned.

V. 73.—“*It caus'd, by the next standard-bearer borne,*”
By Augustus.

V. 74.—“*Brutus and Cassius aye to howl in hell,*”
Dante supposes Brutus and Cassius to grieve, even in the

jaws of Lucifer, for the final extinction of the Roman republic by Augustus.

V. 75.—“*While Modena did with Perugia mourn.*”

Alluding to the battle fought at Modena (anciently Mutina) April 15, b.c. 43, when Mark Antony was defeated. Also to the siege of Perugia by Augustus. This latter old Etruscan city, the Queen of the Apennines, was built by Oenus, who assisted Æneas against Turnus. The inhabitants, to this day, are not a little proud of their origin, and call the buildings of the time of Augustus modern, giving the title of ancient only to what they term “roba Etrusca,” “Etruscan stuff.”

V. 79.—“*With him it pass'd unto the Red Sea shore;*”

With Augustus, when he conquered Egypt.

V. 80, 81.—“*With him o'er all the world such peace it shed,
That wholly closed was Janus' mystic door.*”

Janus, the ancient Thessalian, the earliest king of Italy. He was said to be the son of Apollo, and came to the banks of the Tiber, where he built a small town on the mount still called Janiculum. Thus, according to the old tradition, the Trastevere suburb existed long before Rome itself was built, even from the dim and distant days where the poets fabled the Golden Age. According to those early legends, Saturn, when driven from heaven by Jupiter, took refuge with Janus, who made him his colleague on the throne. This ancient royal city was joined to Rome by the Sublician bridge, in the reign of Ancus Martius. On the Janiculum was buried the wise and gentle Sabine, Numa Pompilius, in a stone coffin, with his twenty-four ceremonial books by his side. There, too, Lars

Porsena encamped when he came to bring back the Tarquins ; and there Mutius Scaevola thrust his hand into the fire. Now the Trasteverine Mount is chiefly remarkable for its wondrously beautiful view of Rome and the neighbourhood, seen from the terrace of St. Pietro in Montorio.

After death, Janus was ranked among the gods, for his popularity and the civilisation which he had introduced among the wild inhabitants of Italy. He was chiefly worshipped in Rome, where he had many temples, some dedicated to him as Bifrons, some as Quadrifrons. He is often represented with two faces, because, being the god of the year, he was supposed to look backwards to the past, and forwards to the future. At other times, he was represented with four heads. The temples of Janus Quadrifrons were square, with a door and three windows at each side, to signify the four seasons, and the three months of which each consists. There is still extant, in Rome, an Arch of Janus Quadrifrons ; it is square, with an archway in each of the four sides. Anciently, when it was entire, there was a room on the top, where the bankers and money-changers met to transact business. This seems to have been the original type from which were developed all the beautiful Town-halls and Exchanges of Italy. They generally consist of an open space below, with arches ; above, there is a hall for business. The most beautiful specimen of this class of building is the Palazzo della Loggia at Brescia. The largest is the Municipal Palace at Padua.

As is well known, the temple of Janus was always open in time of war, and shut in time of peace ; and it is remarkable that from the time of Numa to that of Augustus, that is, during seven hundred years, it had been closed only once (B.C. 235) till just before the birth of our Saviour.

V. 86.—“*If the third Cæsar’s power ye do admire,*”

The power of Tiberius, under whose reign the counsels of God were fulfilled in the death of our Saviour.

V. 92, 93.—“*With Titus afterwards it vengeance sought
Upon the vengeance of the ancient lie.*”

When the Roman armies under Titus destroyed Jerusalem, thereby fulfilling the words of the Jewish people, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

V. 94-96.—“*And when the Lombard tooth much hurt had
wrought
On Holy Church, beneath its wings once more
Did Charlemagne bring aid with vict’ry fraught.*”

When Desiderius, last king of Lombardy, invaded the papal territories, the Pope, Adrian I., called upon Charlemagne for assistance. The latter, though he had married the daughter of Desiderius, marched into Lombardy, took his father-in-law prisoner, and sent him to France, where he died. This happened in 774, and Charlemagne was not crowned Emperor till 800; so that his victory over Desiderius was not really gained under the shadow of the Roman eagles. But Dante probably only meant that Charlemagne, as the future Emperor, was under the especial guidance of Heaven.

V. 97, 98.—“*Now mayst thou judge the men whom I before
Accused,*”

The rival factions of Guelph and Ghibelline, whose struggles desolated Florence.

V. 100-102.—“*One to the public banner doth oppose
The golden lilies; one in guileful part
The other takes:*”

That is, the Guelphs opposed the power of France to that of the Empire; while the Ghibellines made use of the Imperial name to serve their own selfish ends.

V. 106.—“*Nor 'gainst it be the younger Charles so bold,*”

Most commentators explain this to mean Charles of Anjou, who was at war with the Empire for Sicily and Apulia. It has been suggested that it is more probably Charles of Valois, who was sent by Boniface VIII. to head the Guelph party in Florence. It would indeed seem that Dante had a more personal interest in the defeat of Charles of Valois' enterprise than in that of Charles of Anjou. The only objection to this interpretation is, that Dante here calls him *Carlo Novello*, the *younger Charles*, thereby seeming to imply that his father also was Charles. Now, this agrees with Charles II. of Anjou, who was son of Charles I., while Charles of Valois was son of Philip the Hardy. On the other hand, Charles of Valois was certainly the youngest of the French princes of that name, his father, Philip the Hardy, being cousin-german of Charles II. of Anjou. Still, most Italian historians, including Balbo, call Charles of Anjou *Carlo Novello*.

V. 127, 128.—“*Within this present pearl the light doth shine
Of Romeo,*”

This Romeo was a pilgrim, who, on his way from the shrine of St. Jago de Compostella, stopped at the court of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence. There, his talents soon advanced him to the highest offices in the state; but, his greatness ex-

citing the jealousy of the Provençals, he was accused of peculation, and required to give an account of his stewardship. He successfully disproved the accusations against him ; then, though the Court eagerly entreated him to remain, he asked for his mule, staff, and pilgrim's garb, and, riding away, was heard of no more. His very name is unknown : for it is probable that *Romeo* meant simply *the pilgrim*; those who went on a pilgrimage to *Rome* being always called by this name. From this is probably derived our English word *to roam*.

V. 133, 134.—“*Four daughters, and each one a crownèd Queen,
Had Raymond Berenger,*”

The prudence and policy of Romeo gained royal alliances for all Raymond Berenger's daughters. The eldest, Marguerite, married St. Louis, and proved herself worthy of her husband by her heroic conduct when besieged by the Saracens in Damietta. Eleanor married Henry III. of England ; and Sancha, his brother Richard of Cornwall, king of the Romans. For Beatrice, the youngest, Romeo advised Raymond to find a worthy husband, whom he might make heir of his dominions, as he had no son : accordingly, she was given to Charles I. of Anjou, who by his prowess made her Queen of Apulia.

V. 138, 139. — “*who laid
Before him ever seven and five for ten.*”

Raymond Berenger's revenues were greatly increased by Romeo's good management ; so that, although they had previously been heavily encumbered, he supplied the means for ending successfully the war with the Count of Toulouse, without diminishing the splendour of the Provençal court.

V. 142.—“*The while from day to day he begged his bread,*”

Some accounts state that after Romeo left the court of Provence, he lived upon alms.

CANTO VII.

V. 13, 14.—“*But yet the lowly reverence whereby
I still am ruled, if but by B or Ice,*”

“*Ma quella reverenza che s' indonna
Di tutto me, pur per B e per Ice;*”

That is, by the faintest indication of the name of Beatrice.

V. 25.—“*The man for whom there dawn'd no natal day,*”

Adam.

V. 105.—“*By one or both those paths, as, sooth, I say.*”

By both mercy and justice.

V. 133-135. — “*The elements thou here dost name,
And all the things which do from thence proceed,
Only from power creative have their frame.*”

That is, from secondary causes.

V. 137, 138.—“*Created was the virtue ministrant
To them, within the stars which round them
speed.*”

Dante's doctrine is astrological: he supposes that the informative power resides in the stars.

V. 139.—“*The soul of every brute and every plant,*” &c.

In this passage Dante argues that, as the life of animals and plants was originally produced by secondary causes (God saying, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature,” and “Let the earth bring forth grass”), they are therefore perishable; but man, both soul and body, being the immediate work of God, is wholly immortal.

CANTO VIII.

V. 3, 4.—“*The lovely Cypriote shed down her rays
On earthly love:*”

Venus, called “the Cypriote,” because she rose from the sea, near the island of Cyprus.

V. 8-10.—“*To worship Cupid and Dionë; one,
As mother, one, as son: and, oft, they taught,
He sat in Dido's lap.*”

The sea-nymph Dionë was one of the fifty daughters of Doris and the azure-locked Nereus: among her sisters were Thetis and Galatea. She was mother of Venus by Jupiter. Virgil says that Cupid sat in Dido's lap, in the form of the young Ascanius, and inspired her with love for Æneas.

V. 11, 12. —— “*this planet had its name,
Now poursuivant, now herald of the sun.*”

The planet Venus, sometimes appearing as Phosphor, the morning star, sometimes as Hesper, the star of eve.

V. 31.—“*And now, as one of them to us drew nigh,*”

The spirit who now approaches is Charles Martel, king of Hungary, son of Charles II. of Anjou, king of Naples and Jerusalem, surnamed *the Lame* (the Cripple of Jerusalem, as Dante elsewhere calls him). Charles Martel had inherited the Hungarian crown from his mother, Mary of Hungary, daughter of Stephen V., and sister of Ladislaus IV., who died without issue. Andrew III. having seized the throne, however, the young Neapolitan prince never actually reigned. He visited Florence in the year 1289, and formed a friendship for Dante. Afterwards, this friendship was probably increased during Dante’s embassies to Naples. Charles Martel died in 1295, at the age of twenty-three. In 1291, he had married Clemence, daughter of Rudolph of Hapsburg, and by her he had a son called Carlo Roberto, or, according to the Neapolitan contraction, Carobert, who was elected king of Hungary in 1308. Charles II. of Anjou died in 1309 ; and, considering his grandson Carobert sufficiently well provided for, he left his own territories to his third son, Robert Duke of Calabria ; the second, Louis, afterwards canonized, being bishop of Toulouse. Carobert, however, did not acquiesce in this decision of his grandfather’s, and contested the succession to the thrones of Naples and Provence. But the disputants having appealed to Pope Clement V., he decided in favour of Robert.

V. 36, 37.—“*With those to whom thou saidst, in days now gone,
Ye who do govern the third heavenly fire;*”

Dante supposes each of the nine heavens to be governed by one of the nine choirs of the celestial hierarchy, and that the sphere of Venus is moved by those whom he calls *Princes*, or *Principalities*. This theory is more fully developed in

Canto XXVIII. Charles Martel here quotes from Dante's *Convito*.

V. 58, 59. —— “*The left bank where ye see
The Rhone when it is mix'd with Sorga's flow,*”

The territory of Provence, bounded by the Rhone, after it has received the Sorgues, whose crystal waters rise in the fountain of Vaucluse.

V. 51-63. —— “*and where Ausonia's land doth show
Crotona, Bari, Gaeta; and down
Tronto and Verde to the ocean go.*”

That is, the kingdom of Naples. Crotona, now Crotone, on the Bay of Taranto, was anciently one of the most celebrated cities of Magna Grecia. It was founded by the Achæans, about seven centuries and a half before the Christian era ; that is, when Isaiah was prophesying in Jerusalem, and Rome was yet unbuilt and unthought of. Milo and many other celebrated wrestlers at the Olympic games were natives of Crotona. It was also famous as the residence of Pythagoras, and the principal seat of his philosophy. Here he founded his school, about five centuries and a half b.c. ; and forty years later, the city had become so powerful that it brought a hundred thousand men into the field against the Sybarites, who, although three times as numerous, were defeated, and Sybaris was destroyed. After this, however, Crotona rapidly declined ; and its largest armies were defeated by a mere handful of Locrians. At last, Agathocles, the potter's son, made himself master of it. In ecclesiastical history Crotona ranks as one of the earliest Christian bishoprics ; indeed, it has been asserted that its first bishop was Dionysius the Areopagite.

Bari is said to have been founded by Iapyx, son of Dædalus ; but it was less celebrated in ancient than in Middle Age history. From its coins, however, it is known to be of Greek origin, and to have been a place of some importance in the third century B.C. After its possession had been long disputed by the Longobards, the Saracens, and the Greeks, it fell into the hands of the Eastern emperors, who made it the capital of Apulia, and, with short intervals, held it for nearly two centuries, till it became one of the strongholds of the Normans. The Saracens, who had been driven from Bari in 871 by Louis II., Charlemagne's grandson, besieged it in 1002, and would have taken it, if a Venetian fleet had not relieved it. William the Bad, against whom Bari had rebelled, razed it to the ground in 1156. In the fourteenth century, it was made a duchy, which, passing into the hands of various masters, was ceded, at the end of the fifteenth century, to Isabella of Arragon, widow of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan ; and from her, Bona her daughter, Queen of Poland, inherited it. The latter, after the death of her husband, retired to Bari in 1555, where she died in the castle in 1558, leaving the duchy of Bari, by her will, to Philip II. of Spain, who, as is well known, was also sovereign of Naples ; thus Bari was united to the Neapolitan territories. In its castle, Louis of Anjou died of the plague, in October, 1384, during his long war with King Charles Durazzo. Like Crotona, Bari was one of the earliest Christian bishoprics. Here, in 1098, Urban II. held a council of Greek and Latin bishops, in the hope of reconciling the Eastern and Western Churches : at this council, Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, was present.

V. 65, 66.—“*Of all the land which mighty Danube bathes,
After it from the Teuton shores hath gone.*”

Hungary.

V. 67.—“*And fair Trinacria,*” &c.

One of the ancient names of Sicily, from its triangular form.

V. 68.—“*Between Pachinus and Pelorus’ shore,*”

Pachinus, or Pachynus, a promontory of Sicily ; it is now called Cape Passaro. Pelorus, now Cape Faro, one of the three great promontories of Sicily. It received its name from Pelorus, the pilot of the ship which carried Hannibal away from Italy. Being carried by the currents towards Charybdis, the Carthaginian general, who was ignorant of the coast, asked the name of the promontory which appeared at a distance. The pilot told him it was one of the capes of Sicily ; but Hannibal, not believing the island to be so near the mainland, and supposing that he meant to betray him into the hands of the Romans, killed him on the spot. He was, however, soon convinced that the poor man had spoken the truth ; and, to atone for his error, he gave him a magnificent funeral, and ordered that the promontory should ever after bear his name. Accordingly, from that time it was called *Pelorum*. Some writers, however, say that it bore this name long before the days of Hannibal.

V. 69.—“*High o’er the gulf where Euris fiercest breathes,*”

The Gulf of Catania, which is much exposed to the east wind.

V. 70.—“*Not from Typhaeus spring, but sulphur’s store,*”

The hundred-headed, flame-breathing giant Typhaeus, son of Earth and Hell, who made war against Heaven, and so alarmed the gods, that they assumed different forms, and fled. Jupiter became a ram, Mercury an Ibis, Apollo a crow, Juno a cow, Bacchus a goat, Diana a cat, Venus a fish, &c. At last, Typhaeus was conquered by the thunderbolts of Jove, who then

crushed him under Mount Etna. The ancients believed that the flames of Etna were the breath of the fallen giant.

V. 71-75.—“*Had waited still its sovereign lords, whom I
Should get, of Charles' and Rudolph's race, if sore
Oppression of an evil tyranny,
Aye fretting to the conquer'd, had not been
Cause that Palermo cried aloud : ‘Die, die!’”*

At the famous Sicilian Vespers. Charles Martel here implies that, if the kingdom had been ruled by him, it would not have been so tyrannically misgoverned ; and, consequently, his heirs, descended from the house of Anjou and the house of Hapsburg, would still have reigned in Sicily.

V. 77.—“*He from the Catalonian greed had fled.”*

When Robert, younger brother of Charles Martel, was left as a hostage in Catalonia for the king his father, he became acquainted with many of the needy Catalan nobles. On his return to Naples, he was accompanied by these new friends, and promoted them to some of the highest offices in the state. Their grasping avarice seems to have been one of the causes of the Sicilian revolt.

V. 82, 83.—“*His nature, which from liberal sires, of yore,
Descended mean and vile,”*

Boccaccio says of Charles II. of Anjou that “he had one virtue, that is, liberality, and with it he had a thousand vices.” This solitary virtue does not seem to have been inherited by his third son Robert, here spoken of. Villani says of the latter : “He was a mild and amiable ruler, and exceedingly friendly to our community, and endowed with all virtues, save that when

he began to grow old, he deteriorated through avarice in many ways."

V. 87, 88. ——— "*where each worthy deed
Begins and terminates,*"

That is, in God.

V. 100-103. ——— "*Nor only rest
Existences in His all-perfect light,
But these with their salvation are imprest
Therein:*"

Meaning that God not only creates all beings, but provides for their preservation and well-being.

V. 120, 121. ——— "*No, sooth, if rightly sound
Your ancient master's words.*"

The words of Aristotle, who says that men in a perfect commonwealth must be appointed to various trades and professions, and that this diversity should be conformed to their different natures and dispositions.

V. 124-126.— "*For one is born a Solon ; Xerxes, one ;
Another a Melchisedech ; and some,
Like him who lost in airy flight his son.*"

That is, one has talents for Law, one has military skill ; some have a vocation for the priesthood ; others a genius for mechanics, like Daedalus, who invented the sails of ships, the wedge, and many other things. He also constructed automata, and made the famous labyrinth for Minos, king of Crete. After this, Daedalus, having incurred the king's displeasure, was along with his son Icarus, imprisoned in the labyrinth he

himself had invented. Here, in order to escape, he made wings of feathers and wax, for both himself and his son. By means of these they took their flight through the air ; but Icarus soared too high, and the sunbeams melted the wax, and he fell into that part of the ocean which from him was called the Icarian Sea. Daedalus by keeping a lower flight, arrived safely at Cumae, where he built a temple to Apollo. It is easy to perceive how the invention of sails might be magnified, in popular belief, into the construction of wings. Indeed, no one who sees the lateen sails of the Mediterranean can fail to be struck with their resemblance to a white-winged bird. Daedalus lived about 1406 years B.C. ; that is, in the days of the Judges, soon after the death of Joshua, when the children of Israel also served Apollo, under the name of Baal.

V. 127-130.—“*The nature of the spheres, which doth become
A seal to mortal wax, does well its art ;
But yet doth not distinguish what doth come
From one or other household.”*

Dante, being a believer in astrology, here says that human vices and virtues are not hereditary, but proceed from the influence of the stars.

CANTO IX.

V. 1, 2.—“*Then, fair Clementza, when thy Charles had freed
My mind from doubt,*”

It is uncertain who Dante here addresses. The most probable opinion seems to be that she was the widow of Charles Martel ;

but many commentators suppose her to be his daughter, also called Clemenza, who married Louis X. of France.

V. 3.—“*The injuries in store for all his seed.*”

In being excluded from the throne of Naples.

V. 5, 6.—“*I may but tell thee that just punishment
Shall come, as retribution for your woe.*”

Dante considers that the revolt of Sicily, at the time of the Sicilian Vespers (Easter Monday, 1282), was a punishment for the exclusion of the rightful heir from the throne.

V. 8, 9. — “*unto the Sun, which all doth fill
With bliss, the Good which ever doth content.*”

The spirit of Charles Martel returns to the Empyrean, where the glory of God is seen in unveiled splendour.

V. 13, 14.—“*And lo! to me another dazzling ray
Approach'd,*”

The spirit of Cunizza, sister of Ezzelino da Romano, tyrant of Padua, and Imperial Vicar of the March of Treviso. Considering her character and the circumstances of her life, it seems strange that Dante should have placed her in Heaven. It has been suggested that motives of friendship and gratitude induced him to do so; as Cunizza is said to have shown him kindness in his childhood. But Dante is not usually so indulgent; nor is he ever led into injustice by friendship, gratitude, or anything else. Among many other instances, he puts his loved and respected master, Brunetto Latini, far down in hell, amid the shower of eternal fire. Moreover, it could certainly be no regard for her family that led him to such unwonted indulgence; for a

more sanguinary tyrant never existed than her brother Ezzelino, whom Dante, with great propriety, places in hell, in the river of boiling blood.

Cunizza is said to have been kind and gentle in disposition, and extremely compassionate to those who suffered from her brother's cruelty. But, otherwise, her life seems to have been a succession of very discreditable love-adventures. Married in her youth to Count Richard of St. Boniface, she soon was detected in an intrigue with Sordello, the Mantuan troubadour (*see Purgatorio, Canto VI.*). She next eloped with a knight of Treviso, called Bonio, who was already married, and wandered about with him, living in the most luxurious and costly manner. Bonio being at length killed by Cunizza's brothers, she returned to Ezzelino, and was married by him to a nobleman of Braganza. He too was soon killed by the ferocious tyrant, and she afterwards married a third time in Verona.

V. 25-28. — “*that bordering
Of guilty Italy, which wholly lies
Between Rialto and each flowing spring
Of Brenta and Piava,*”

The March of Treviso, which lies between Venice on the one side, and the sources of the Piava and Brenta on the other.

V. 29.—“*A lowly mount, from whence a firebrand came,*”
The castle of Romano, in the March of Treviso. Here Ezze-
lino was born, whom Dante justly calls a firebrand.

V. 37.—“*But of this lustrous jewel of our sky,*”
The “lustrous jewel” of whom Cunizza now speaks is Foulques, or Fouquet, of Marseilles, the troubadour. He was

the son of a rich Genoese merchant, named Alfonso, established in Marseilles, where Foulques was born. “He was,” says his anonymous chronicler, “much honoured by King Richard of England” (*Cœur de Lion*), “Count Raymond of Toulouse, and Barral of Marseilles, whose court he frequented. He was handsome in person, accomplished in discourse, courteous in giving, and ardent, but discreet, in love. He loved Adalagia, wife of Barral, his lord ; and, to conceal this, he feigned to pay court to Laura di S. Giulia and Belina di Pontevese, sisters (or, as some say, sisters-in-law) of Barral.” The chronicler goes on to state that, on the death of Adalagia, “a marvellous grief took possession of him : whereupon he, his wife, and two of his sons, entered the Cistercian order.” He was afterwards Bishop of Marseilles, and lastly Archbishop of Toulouse : in which capacity he was a great persecutor of the Albigenses. He died about 1213.

V. 43, 44. —— “*And the mob who dwell
'Twixt Adige and Tagliamento's flood,*”

The Tagliamento flows down from the Alps of Friuli, and falls into the sea just at the mouth of the Gulf of Trieste. The Adige rises in the Tyrol, flowing due south till it is nearly parallel with the foot of the Lago di Garda ; then it bends eastward, and falls into the sea below Chioggia : thus enclosing the March of Treviso, and the territories of Verona, Vicenza, Este, Padua, and Venice.

V. 46-48. —— “*but soon with blood
The stream which bathes Vicenza's walls shall run
Shed by the Paduans' most cruel brood.*”

On two different occasions, under the walls of Vicenza, battles were fought between the Paduans (who were Guelphs) and the

Ghibelline league ; first, in 1314, and secondly, in 1318. On the latter occasion, the Ghibellines were commanded by Can-grande della Scala. The slaughter was great ; and thus the Bacchiglione, which flows past Vicenza, ran red.

V. 49-51.—“*Where Silis and Cagnano join doth one
Go haughtily, with head uplifted high,
For whom the spider now her web hath spun.*”

Cunizza goes on to say that at Treviso, where the Sile (anciently Silis) and the Cagnano join, one, *i.e.*, Richard or Camino, was lording it haughtily, while even then the conspiracy was on foot which was to slay him. This Richard, son of Gerard the Good, and brother of Gaia (who are mentioned in the Purgatorio, Canto XVI.), succeeded his father as lord of Treviso, but it would appear had not inherited his good qualities. Having deeply injured some of his nobles, they conspired against him, and hired a peasant to kill him. Accordingly, one day when he was sitting in an arbour playing at chess or dice (the Italian word *tavole* may mean draughts, backgammon, or chess), the peasant came behind him, and struck him down with a mattock. The conspirators, who stood round, immediately fell upon the peasant, and despatched him. He thus could not betray them, having only time to say, “This was not in the bargain.” Boccaccio, however, says that he was killed by a madman. Probably the conspirators gave out that the peasant was mad, in order to account for his sudden attack on Richard.

V. 52.—“*Feltro shall mourn her pastor's treachery,*”

In 1314, when Robert, king of Naples, had been invested by the Pope with the government of Ferrara, the Ghibellines conspired to make themselves masters of the city. This being discovered, their leader Lancelotto Fontana, with some of his

followers, fled to Feltro. Here they were received with treacherous courtesy by the Bishop, Gorza di Lussia, and then delivered up to Pino della Tosa, a Florentine, whom King Robert had appointed Podestà, or governor, of Ferrara. The Podestà having, by means of the rack, extorted confessions implicating many others, caused them all to be executed. Soon after, Feltro came into the possession of Guecelo, brother and heir of Richard of Camino, and is said to have been treated with great severity. Dante considers this as a retribution for the Bishop's treachery.

V. 54.—“*Within the prisons which in Marta lie,*”

Marta, or Malta, a stronghold on a small island, called Martana, in the Lake of Bolsena. It was used as a prison from a very early period ; for here the good and learned Amalasuntha, Queen of the Ostrogoths, was imprisoned and murdered. In this pestilential solitude, the clergy convicted of capital crimes were shut up ; a sentence tantamount to that of death.

V. 61.—“*Above are mirrors, which ye Thrones do call,*”

That is, in the Empyrean the judgments of God imprint themselves on that order of heavenly beings whom Dante, following the system of Dionysius the Areopagite, calls *Thrones* ; and from them are reflected on the souls of the blessed.

V. 67.—“*The other joy, to me already shown,*”

Foulques, of Marseilles, whom Cunizza has already pointed out to Dante.

V. 82. — “*Where the waters be
Spread in the amplest vale,*” &c.

The Mediterranean.

V. 85-87.—“*And 'twixt discordant shores, against the sun
Extend, till the meridian-line doth stretch,
Where the horizon first ye look'd upon.*”

Dante is mistaken in supposing that the line which is the horizon at one end of the Mediterranean is the meridian at the other. If it were as he here states, the Mediterranean must extend over ninety degrees of longitude, that is, a fourth of the entire surface of the earth ! His error was probably in supposing the earth to be smaller, rather than the Mediterranean larger, than it really is ; and this belief was according to the geographical knowledge of those times. Dante calls the shores of the Mediterranean *discordant*, inasmuch as Europe and Asia are opposed in religion, manners, civilisation, &c.

V. 89-91.—“*'Twixt Ebro's stream and Magra's, which, in short
And rapid course, doth as a bound'ry reach
'Tween Genoese and Tuscans.*”

The Magra, whose impetuous stream, rushing down from the Maritime Alps, is well known to all travellers who have journeyed along the lovely Riviera. It anciently divided Liguria from the Lunigiana ; and more recently, Genoa from Tuscany.

About the Ebro there have been many disputes. The common opinion is that the Spanish river of that name is meant ; which agrees with Foulques' assertion that his birthplace lay half-way between those streams. But some commentators have endeavoured to prove that Foulques was born in Genoa, not in Marseilles, and have consequently been obliged to assume that the Ebro is a small stream between Nice and Monaco. Lombardi's observation on this is exquisitely quaint. “Quest' Ebro però tra Monaco e Nizza è tanto piccolo, ch' io non lo trovo in nessuna descrizione d' Italia, e temo della sua esistenza. Ma

siavi pure." "This Ebro, however, between Monaco and Nice is so small, that I do not find it in any description of Italy; and I fear for its existence. But yet, be it so."

V. 92.—“*Doth the meridian of Buggea lie.*”

A town on the coast of Africa, only half a degree east of Marseilles.

V. 93, 94. —— “*in whose port
Warm blood flow'd once in waves.*”

When Marseilles held out for Pompey, and the troops of Julius Cæsar took it with great slaughter. Those who suppose that Genoa is here meant instead of Marseilles, explain this passage as referring to a horrible massacre by the Saracens, which took place there in 936.

V. 97-99. —— “*No fiercer flame
In Belus' daughter glow'd (which sorely grieved
Creusa and Sichæus)*”

Dido, daughter of Belus, had promised her husband Sichæus never to marry again. Creusa, daughter of Priam, and wife of Æneas, was, in the confusion of the taking of Troy, parted from her husband, who could never again find her. Cybele saved her, and carried her to her temple, of which she became priestess.

V. 100-103. —— “*nor in the maid deceived
Whom Demophoon did with false love beguile
Near Rhodopë; nor Hercules received
Of Iolë.*”

Demophoon, son of Theseus and Phædra, was king of Athens, b.c. 1182, and reigned thirty-three years. On his return from

the Trojan war, he visited Thrace, where he was hospitably received. Here he won the affections of Phyllis, the king's daughter: then, after some months, he set sail for Athens, promising to return before the moon had again fulfilled her course. The appointed time expired, and Demophoon came not: he had either forgotten his promise, or was detained by his affairs. At length Phyllis, despairing of his return, and unable to live without him, hanged herself. From the spot where she was buried sprang up an almond-tree, whose leaves, on the anniversary of her death, became wet, as if shedding tears. So the legend said that the gods had changed her into an almond-tree. Some days after, Demophoon returned; and when he heard the fate of Phyllis he ran and clasped the tree, which though at that time stripped of its leaves, suddenly grew green and blossomed.

Rhodope was a mountain of Thrace, from which the Thracians were sometimes called Rhodopeans.

Iole, daughter of Eurytus, king of Æchalia. Her father had promised her in marriage to any one who was a better marksman than himself. Hercules conquered him; but he refused to perform his engagement, and the victor accordingly slew him. It was to extinguish the love of Hercules for Iole, that Dejanira sent him the poisoned tunic which caused his death.

V. 118, 119.—“*Unto this realm (whereon the shadow lies
Thrown by your earth)*”

Ptolemy says, in his Almagest, that the conical shadow of the earth ends with its point on the planet Venus.

V. 125, 126. — “*the Holy Land
Whereof the Pope hath little memory.*”

Dante here reproves the Pope for not organising a new Crusade.

V. 127, 128.—“*Thy city, which as plant of him doth stand
Who first rebelled against his Maker's power.*”

Florence being founded in consequence of the bloody destruction of Fiesole, was dedicated by the Romans to Mars. In accordance with the Middle Age belief, the gods of Greece and Rome were veritable demons: thus Satan himself was considered to have been the original patron of the city.

V. 130.—“*Produces and sends forth the accursed flower.*”

The golden florin, coined at Florence in 1252, and so called from the lily whose image it bore. This florin was of gold twenty-four carats fine, and its weight was one drachm: on one side was the lily; on the other, the Baptist, as protector of the city. This coin remained unaltered, as the standard for all other values, as long as the republic lasted. Florence had always the reputation of great wealth; thus Boniface VIII., when he sent Charles of Valois thither, said: “I send you to the fountain of gold; if you do not quench your thirst, the worse for you.” Gold coins were rare in those days, silver being the usual currency.

V. 134, 135. —— “*the Canon Laws alone
Are read,*” &c.

The Canon Laws, or Decretals, were in six volumes; five were compiled by order of Gregory IX., and Boniface VIII. added the sixth. The priests of Dante's day seem to have preferred the study of the Decretals, by means of which they might attain wealth and honour, to that of Theology. It was a common complaint in those ages, that Law was studied to the exclusion of everything else. Innocent IV., who reigned in the middle of the thirteenth century, alarmed at seeing the lectures

of philosophy completely deserted for those of jurisprudence, made a course of philosophical study indispensable to the acquirement of any ecclesiastical honours or benefices. His bull is in the following terms :—

“ Innocent, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to all the prelates of the kingdoms of France, England, Scotland, Wales, Spain, and Hungary, greeting and apostolical benediction.

“ A deplorable rumour is spread abroad, and, repeated from mouth to mouth, has come to afflict our ears. It is said that the crowd of aspirants to sacerdotal orders, abandoning, even repudiating philosophical studies, and consequently also the instructions of theology, flock wholly to the schools where the civil laws are explained. It is added (and it is this, above all, that calls down the severities of Divine Justice), that in a great number of countries the bishops reserve prebends, honours, and ecclesiastical dignities, for those who occupy the chairs of jurisprudence, or enjoy the title of advocate ; while these qualifications, if they are not adorned by others, should be considered as motives of exclusion. The nurselings of philosophy, so tenderly cherished in her bosom, so assiduously fed with her doctrines, so well fashioned by her cares for the duties of life, languish in a misery which leaves them neither daily bread, nor garments for their nakedness, and which constrains them to fly from the regards of men and to seek darkness, like the birds of night. And at the same time our Churchmen, become lawyers, mounted on superb horses, clothed in purple, covered with jewels, gold, and silk, reflecting in their ornaments the rays of the scandalised sun, display everywhere the spectacle of their pride ; they show in their own persons, instead of the vicars of Christ, the heirs of Lucifer, and provoke the anger of the people, not only against themselves, but against the sacred

authority of which they are the unworthy representatives. Sarah then is the slave ; Hagar has made herself the mistress.

“ We have wished to provide a remedy for this unaccustomed disorder. We have wished to recall the minds of men to the instructions of theology, which is the science of salvation ; or at least to philosophical studies, in which there are not found, it is true, the sweet emotions of piety, but where is discovered the first glimmering light of eternal truth, where the soul frees itself from the miserable pre-occupations of cupidity, which is the root of all evil and like the worship of idols. In consequence, we decide by these presents that for the future no professor of jurisprudence, no advocate, whatever his rank or the renown he enjoys in the faculty of Law, may pretend to prebends, honours, and ecclesiastical dignities, nor even to inferior benefices, unless he has given the required proofs of capacity in the faculty of arts, and unless he is recommended by the innocence of his life and the purity of his manners. And should any prelate, by a condemnable presumption, permit himself to infringe in any manner on this salutary disposition, he shall, for the first offence, be deprived of the power of conferring the vacant benefice ; and for the second he may be punished by spiritual divorce, which we shall pronounce against the prevaricator in depriving him of his prelacy.

“ Given at Rome, the year of the Incarnation 1254.”

Truly, Pope Innocent IV. seems to have had a great antipathy to lawyers !

CANTO X.

V. 8, 9. — “*that part
Wherein one line across another lies.*”

That part where the ecliptic crosses the equator, which happens at the equinox ; that is, when the sun is in Aries or Libra.

V. 13, 14.—“*See how the oblique circle, which doth bear
The planets,*” &c.

The ecliptic, which, if it were to diverge from its course on one side or other, would derange the whole course of the seasons.

V. 28.—“*The greatest minister of Nature’s light.*”

The Sun, which Dante and Beatrice have now entered.

V. 31, 32.—“*With this same part conjoin’d, whereof I even
But now did speak.*”

Conjoined with the zodiacal sign of Aries, alluded to V. 9.

V. 35. — “*as a man is ware
Of thought, ere yet it with his mind is blent.*”

That is, not aware of it at all ; thus Dante’s ascent to the Sun was instantaneous.

V. 66, 67.—“*That my united mind was soon, I ween,
Divided.*”

Dante’s attention, first wholly fixed upon God, was now again divided by the smile of Beatrice.

V. 71, 72.—“*Even as Latona's daughter, when the air
Retains the thread whereof she weaves her zone.*”

When the moon is surrounded by a halo.

V. 85.—“*Then, within one of them these words were sain.*”

The spirit now about to speak is St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, head of the Dogmatic School of Theology, the Aristotle of the Middle Ages. He was born, in 1224, at Rocca Secca, between Ceprano and San Germano. Of princely descent, he was grand-nephew of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and consequently second cousin of Frederick II., whom, however, he certainly did not at all resemble, save in his great talents, and love of philosophy. His early education was in the lordly monastery of Monte Cassino, overlooking the wild mountains and thick oak-forests of San Germano ; and there he acquired that love of the cloister which induced him, against the wishes of his parents, to become a Dominican at Naples. In 1244, he proceeded to Paris, and from thence to Cologne, where he studied under Albertus Magnus, the greatest master of theology in the Middle Ages. Here, however, the young monk was thought so stupid that his schoolfellows called him the Dumb Ox of Sicily ; till, one day, he gave such brilliant answers to some difficult questions propounded by his master, that Albert, delighted, exclaimed : “ We call him the dumb ox, but he will give such a bellow as will be heard all over the world.”

He afterwards returned to Paris, where his lectures on the Sentences of Peter Lombard were received with great applause. About 1261, he went to Rome, where he was made Definitor of his Order ; and, after teaching in many universities and living in many convents, he finally settled at Naples, in 1272.

He lived there in the monastery of S. Domenico Maggiore, and was a Professor in the university then established within its walls. His salary, fixed by the King himself, was an ounce of gold monthly, equal to twenty shillings at the present time. There he spent the rest of his life, constantly refusing the ecclesiastical honours which were offered him ; among others, the Archbishopric of Naples. His lecture-room and a fragment of his pulpit still exist, but the little cell of the great teacher is now a chapel. In this Neapolitan convent he composed several of his works ; and here Charles of Anjou and his court often came to attend his lectures. On the principal altar of the adjoining church, is the celebrated crucifix which is said to have talked to him when he was composing his *Summa Theologie*. Thus it spoke : “Thou hast well written of me, Thomas ; therefore what reward wilt thou have ?” to which he replied : “None other but thee.”

Not much longer did his life and labours last. In 1274, he was sent for to assist at the second Council of Lyons, but died on the way, at the Cistercian convent of Fossanova, between Terracina and Appii Forum. As usually happened in those days, on the death of any celebrated character, he was supposed to have died of poison, administered by the emissaries of Charles of Anjou. But this is extremely improbable ; for, as we have already seen, this monarch rather appears to have admired and befriended him ; and, even supposing that there were reasons for wishing that so powerful an influence should be kept from the Council of Lyons, Charles might easily have taken other means to prevent his journey. It seems more likely that he fell a victim to the deadly malaria of the pestilential Pontine marshes.

All over Italy are scattered the memorials of the mighty theologian. In the Biblioteca Borbonica, at Naples, is a manu-

script commentary, in his own handwriting, on the Celestial Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite. It is, or used to be, annually exhibited, on the festival of St. Thomas (March 7th) in the church of S. Domenico. At Fondi, that most lovely and most filthy spot, is an orange-tree which he planted, and a well that bears his name. He lived and preached for some time in the Dominican Convent here ; but most certainly at the present day, the wild, brigand-like inhabitants of the town do not look as if they had profited much by those subtle disquisitions on the angel-hosts. At quiet old Pisa, too, which seems more in harmony with learned studies, one sees his pulpit and the church where he preached. But everywhere he was admired, applauded, and venerated ; and Dante, who was nine years old at the time of his death, may possibly have remembered the general lamentation which it caused. Be that as it may, he was an ardent admirer of the Angelic Doctor's system of theology, and puts him here in one of the high places of Heaven, before the Church had named him Saint. He was not canonized till two years after Dante's death.

Hooker calls St. Thomas Aquinas the greatest among the School Divines. Bucer said of him : "Take Thomas away, and I will overturn the Church of Rome." And well did he deserve his fame, not only for the wondrous subtlety of his intellect, but for the moral grandeur of his precepts. Thus wrote the almost royally descended Saint : "It is an error frequent among men to believe themselves noble, because they are born of a noble family. This error may be combated in different manners. And first, if we consider the creating cause of which we are the works, God, in being himself the author of our race, has without doubt ennobled it wholly. If we look at the second and created cause, the first parents from whom we are descended, they are still the same for all : all have received of Adam and Eve the

same nobility, the same nature. We do not read that God made two men at the beginning : one, of silver, to be the first ancestor of the nobles ; the other, of clay, to be the father of the common people. But he made one only, of the dust of the earth, and by him we are brothers. On the same stem are born the rose and the thorn. The rose is a noble creation, delicious to those who draw near ; it sheds its perfumes around in sweet profusion. The thorn, on the contrary, is a vile excrescence which tears the hands of those who are imprudent enough to touch it. Thus, from the same family two men may be born, one noble, the other ignoble. One, like the rose, will shed blessings around, and he shall be noble : the other, like the thorn, will wound those who approach, until he is thrown, even as the thorn, into the fire, a fire which shall be eternal ; and this man is ignoble. It is well not to have degenerated from the examples of noble ancestors ; but it is better to have given lustre to lowly birth by great actions. True nobility is that of the soul."

These are indeed noble words ; and since they were first spoken, six hundred years ago, they have been repeated sometimes by strangely differing voices ; differing a good deal from each other, and still more from that of the dignified theologian who rarely left the cloister, save to dine with St. Louis (who, we are told, made a secretary attend to write down the sudden inspirations of his guest). In the midst of the dreary eighteenth century, when another Louis, very unlike the Saint of that name, was on the throne of France, when even in England it is to be feared that most things, both of outward and inward adornment, were somewhat artificial, when in the world generally people were rather inclined to believe that there had been originally a silver man and a clay man, a poet, not himself altogether devoid of taste for pomps and frivolities, put the

precepts which are quoted above into a neat and epigrammatic form, thus :

“ Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
And all the rest is leather and prunella.”

And a little later a Scotch ploughman sang :

“ The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
The man’s the gowd, for a’ that.”

And in our own day, from one yet among us, have we not heard a melodious echo of the words of the old Schoolman ?

“ Howe’er it be, it seems to me
’Tis only noble to be good :
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

V. 101, 102. — “ *and he
Is Albert of Cologne.* ”

Albert of Cologne, surnamed the Great, the most renowned teacher of theology and philosophy during the Middle Ages, was born in 1193, at Lauingen in Suabia, of the ancient house of the Counts of Bollstadt. He studied at Paris, and also at Padua, then beginning to be famed for its learned University. He then entered the Dominican Order, and went to Cologne, where he taught in the schools of that city. In 1228 he was called to fill the chair of his Order in the Jacobin Convent at Paris. Here he lectured, as everybody seems to have done in those days, on the Sentences of Peter Lombard ; and met with enthusiastic applause and some suspicion. People thought he was a great deal too clever to be altogether a safe preceptor ; and began to hint at a compact with the Evil One. This accu-

sation probably originated in Albert's great love of natural science ; for it would appear that, in the Middle Ages, it was considered light-minded and frivolous to look at the works of Nature, and decidedly irreligious, not to say diabolical, to study them. Be this as it may, after three years' stay in Paris (where we still find memorials of him, in the names of *Place Maubert* and *Rue Maître Albert*), the Universal Doctor, as he was called, went back to Cologne, where he settled among his Dominican brethren, and taught as before. But his labours were not confined to cloistered studies. As Provincial of Germany, commissioned by the Diet of Worms, he visited all the monasteries under his jurisdiction ; severely reproved the monks, almost universally sunk in ignorance and idleness ; and rescued many precious manuscripts, which their careless possessors, either from stupidity or fanaticism, would have left to rot in dust and damp. Afterwards he was summoned to Rome, where he was made Grand Master of the Palace, by Pope Alexander IV. He was also compelled, in 1261, to accept the Bishopric of Ratisbon ; but after three years of able administration, he resigned all his dignities, and went back to his beloved cloister at Cologne. There he taught during the remainder of his long and laborious life ; and there he died in 1282, at the great age of eighty-nine, having survived his younger friend and disciple, Thomas Aquinas.

The erudition of Albert the Great was prodigious. He quotes familiarly, and with equal facility, Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Jewish philosophers. He was the first Schoolman who lectured on the whole range of Aristotle's physical and metaphysical philosophy ; and, indeed, he was afterwards called the Ape of Aristotle. And not only Aristotle, but all the Arabian commentators of Aristotle, were thoroughly studied by him. But perhaps he was greatest in Natural Science ; so great that, as

already mentioned, the populace believed him to be a magician, and it is even said that, terrified at his own discoveries, he more than half believed it himself. Chemistry and astronomy were his favourite studies ; and in mathematics he was also deeply versed, for he commented and explained Euclid. He was rather a philosopher than a theologian ; and the distinctive character of his teaching was the effort to reconcile Aristotle with Plato, and both with the doctrines of the Christian Church.

V. 107.—“*From Gratian's smile, who did both forums aid.*”

Gratian was born about the middle of the tenth century, in the Tuscan city of Chiusi, and became a Benedictine monk at Bologna. He compiled a work called the *Decretum*, in which he collated the Ecclesiastical Canons with the Civil Law, and explained each in reference to the other. In this arduous task he employed twenty-four years.

V. 110, 111.—“*That Peter was, who, with the widow poor,
Within the Holy Church his treasure laid.*”

Peter Lombard, the “Master of the Sentences,” was so called from his great work, which has served as a text-book in so many Universities, and on which so many commentaries have been written. He was born at Novara ; but came into France to continue his studies, bearing a recommendation from the Bishop of Lucca to St. Bernard. He remained some time at Rheims, and then proceeded to Paris, where he became tutor to the eldest son of Louis le Gros, that young prince Philip, who, as the chronicler tells us, was killed in the suburbs of Paris, by “a diabolical pig” running between his horse’s legs, and throwing him to the ground.

Here the reputation of Peter Lombard was so great that when

Henry, brother of Louis VII. and of the young prince above-mentioned, was chosen bishop of Paris, he resigned that dignity to his old master as being more worthy of it. The latter held his bishopric only one year, and died in 1160. His *Liber Sententiarum* contains a system of theology the most complete that had as yet appeared ; and cold and dry as it may now seem (so dry and so cold that its author has been called "the Euclid of mathematical theology") it was received with the most enthusiastic reverence in the Middle Ages. In the preface, Peter Lombard humbly compares himself to the poor widow, who offered little, but that little was all she had.

V. 112.—“*The fifth, who hath of light the fairest store.*”

Solomon, concerning the fate of whose soul there were many discussions in the Middle Ages.

V. 119, 120.—“*The soul of him who, in his flesh the while,
The life of angel-ministrants best knew.*”

Dionysius the Areopagite, who heard St. Paul's sermon on “the unknown God,” was claimed, in the Middle Ages, as author of the curious work called the Celestial Hierarchy, written, in reality, about the fourth century. Who really wrote it is unknown ; the first notice we have of it is when quoted by the defenders of a heretical sect at a conference in Constantinople. The orthodox party were greatly surprised ; for it seemed very strange that the works of the Athenian Saint should have been so long concealed. But soon, the Eastern Church agreed to accept them as genuine ; and, in the ninth century, they appeared in the West as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor to the Emperor Louis the Pious. This gift, however valuable, was not at that time very generally

useful, seeing that there was only one Greek scholar in the whole West of Europe. But that one was a host in himself ; being no other than the learned Scot, John Erigena, who had travelled to Athens to study the language. He accordingly hastened to translate into Latin the Celestial Hierarchy, the Treatise on the Name of God, and the chapters on the Mystic Philosophy. These latter works are supposed to have influenced St. Buonaventura, Richard and Hugh of St. Victor, and indeed all the Mystic Divines.

V. 121-123.—“*And in yon lesser radiance there doth smile
The Advocate of Christian times, from whom
Augustine drew the subject of his style.*”

This is supposed to be Paulus Orosius, who, in the fifth century, acquired great reputation by the History of the World which he wrote to refute the slanders of the Pagans against Christianity. The scope of this work seems to have been anything but cheerful : an Italian commentator describes it as “sette libri di storie delle calamità e sceleratezze del mondo ;” that is, “seven books of histories of the calamities and villanies of the world.” It seems however, to have been relished in its day ; for St. Augustine pursued a similar train of argument in his work *De Civitate Dei* : and moreover sent the author to Jerusalem, to consult St. Jerome concerning the origin of the soul.

Orosius is classed by Dante, in his treatise “On Vulgar Eloquence,” as one of his favourite authors, among those “who have written prose with the greatest loftiness of style.” The others whom he mentions are Cicero, Livy, Pliny, and Frontinus.

Dante here calls Orosius a “lesser radiance,” as compared with the king who had spoken with God, and the Saint who had listened to St. Paul. Some commentators have supposed

that St. Ambrose, not Paulus Orosius, is here meant ; others suggest Lactantius : but these opinions are generally considered erroneous. It has also sometimes been thought that, in this passage, *templi* or *tempii*, *temples* should be read, instead of *tempi*, *times*. But most of the best authorities adopt the latter reading, which also, if it be Paulus Orosius to whom Dante here alludes, seems to agree better with the subjects of which he wrote.

V. 128, 129. —— “*the pure soul who erst made manifest
To heedful ears, the world's fallacious ways.*”

Boethius, descendant of the great families whose names he bore (Anicius Manlius Torquatus), seems to recall the ancient as well as the mediæval world. Of Roman birth, in him were united all the old patrician memories, all the republican glories of his native city, not as yet quite the Rome of the Middle Ages, but no longer the Imperial Mistress of the world. The Western Empire was no more ; having been destroyed by Odoacer, about the time of Boethius' birth : but the consuls, attended by the lictors, still sat on their ivory chairs ; and Boethius himself filled this office in 510. His two sons were also consuls ; and we read of him going from the Senate to the Circus, and there, standing between these two consul-sons, distributing gifts to the people, who deemed that the old Imperial days were come again, when they enjoyed largely the two Roman necessities of life, “bread and games.” If on one side he touched the age of the Cæsars, on the other rose the dawn of modern times ; for Boethius was contemporary with Clovis. But the wild Frankish barbarian was very unlike the accomplished Roman senator, who spent his leisure in studying mathematics and Greek philosophy ; who translated Aristotle and the commentators of Aristotle ; and from whose writings,

and particularly from a passage in his version of Porphyry, the whole system of Scholastic Philosophy was to arise. Boethius also defended the Catholic faith against the Arians, in a treatise *De Unitate*. At length, his zeal incurred the displeasure of Theodoric, who imprisoned him at Pavia, and afterwards put him to death, in 524. It was during this imprisonment that he wrote his celebrated work On the Consolation of Philosophy, the first book that roused Dante from his sorrow for the death of Beatrice. It was translated into Anglo-Saxon by our own king Alfred.

Boethius was buried at Pavia, in the church of S. Pietro, in Cielo d' Oro; where a hundred and twenty years later, the body of St. Augustine also was brought by Luitprand, King of the Lombards. The church has long been in ruins; and while the African bishop lies now in his magnificent tomb in the Cathedral, the resting-place of the Roman philosopher is almost forgotten.

V. 134, 135.—“*Of Isidore, of Bede, and Richard; he
In mind a more than human greatness hath.*”

The Isidore here mentioned is generally supposed to be St. Isidore of Seville, who was bishop of that city forty years, during which he was the benefactor of the poor, and the oracle of Spain. He died in 636. The council of Toledo called him “the doctor of his age, and the ornament of the Church.” He was also called “the Egregious Doctor.” He wrote Commentaries on the Scriptures; a Treatise of Ecclesiastical Writers; a Chronicle, beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve, and ending A.D. 626; and other works. Dante may however possibly here mean St. Isidore of Cordova, bishop of that city under Theodosius the Younger and Honorius. He wrote Commentaries on the Books of Kings, dedicated to Paulus

Orosius. There have been two other Saints of the same name ; viz., St. Isidore of Alexandria, and St. Isidore of Pelusium. The latter was a disciple of St. Chrysostom, and when young embraced the monastic life, and lived as a hermit in a cell near Pelusium. He wrote many letters, some of which are lost ; but two thousand and twelve are still extant ! He died about 440. The other St. Isidore was born in Egypt about 318. He passed many years in solitude, but was ordained by Athanasius, and placed over a monastery, whence he was called Isidore the Hospitaller. He defended Athanasius against the Arians, for which he was banished by the Patriarch Theophilus. He then went to Constantinople, where he died in 403.

The Venerable Bede was, as is well known, the first chronicler of the Anglo-Saxon Church. He was born in 672, at Wearmouth, in the bishopric of Durham, and died in 735. The fame of his learning was so great, that Pope Sergius I. invited him to Rome ; but he declined, preferring his quiet cloister of Jarrow.

Richard of St. Victor, a native of Scotland, was canon and prior of the Parisian Monastery of St. Victor, which sent forth so many learned men. He was the author of a treatise on Contemplation, which he speaks of as sometimes raising men to the participation of a higher kind of intellect. Dante seems here to intimate that the mind of Richard himself had thus risen to this higher power. Deeply imbued with Platonic lore, he was at the head of the Mystics of the twelfth century ; but delighted more in deep and dreamy meditation than in the intellectual combats of the Schools, where, truth to say, the disputants sometimes came to blows, when other arguments failed.

V. 140, 141. —— “*Sigier; who, in the Street named of Straw,
Words true, but oft unpalatable, taught.*”

Sigier, a native of Brabant, who lectured on theology at the Sorbonne, then newly founded. There he appears by his daring propositions to have incurred the suspicions of the Dominicans, before whose tribunal he was cited as a heretic, in 1278. What the result of this trial was, does not exactly appear ; but probably Sigier succeeded in clearing himself from the imputations against him, as he was not burnt alive, which otherwise he certainly would have been. Among the manuscripts of the Sorbonne are preserved some fragments of treatises on Dialectics, with the name of Sigier. These are probably quite irreproachable ; but there is in the same library, a book bearing the title of *Impossibilita*, which opens in these terms : “The doctors of the School of Paris, having been assembled together, a dialectician proposed to prove and to defend before them several impossible theses, of which the first is this : ‘That God does not exist.’” Then follow several other propositions of like nature, with their arguments. This dialectician is supposed to have been Sigier. Most probably such propositions were supported by him merely as a trial of skill, without really believing them in the least : as it seems quite impossible, that, if he had opinions of this nature, Dante could have placed him in Paradise. The meaning of this passage appears to be that Sigier preached truths which were unpalatable to some of his hearers, and thereby drew down on himself the wrath of the Dominicans : but it may perhaps also mean that he taught doctrines which had an appearance of infidelity. He was certainly believed to have been, at one time, atheistical in his views ; and in some of the manuscript commentaries on the Divine Comedy the following legend is found : “Then was

shown to Dante the soul of Sigier of Brabant, who was a most learned man in all the sciences, and was an infidel, and a teacher in Paris ; and then occurred to him this incident, namely, that one of his scholars being dead, he appeared to him one night in a vision, and showed him how he suffered many pains. And among the other pains which he showed him, he made him hold his hand open, and dropped into it a drop of his sweat. And so burning was it, that Sigier awoke ; and for this reason he abandoned study, was baptised, became a holy friend of God, and strove from thenceforth to recall the opinions of philosophers to the holy Catholic faith."

However heretical Sigier may have been, it is difficult to imagine why he was not baptised as an infant, unless his parents were also unbelievers. Be this as it may, the story is much older than the days of Sigier, and has often been repeated, in prose and verse. One manuscript says that the disciple appeared with his hood full of sophisms !

Sigier must have died towards the end of the thirteenth century, as, before the year 1300, we find a legacy of part of the works of Thomas Aquinas, left "to the poor masters in theology of the house of Sorbonne," by Sigier, then dean of the Collegiate Church of Courtray.

The "Street named of Straw," is the Rue du Fouarre, in Paris ; so called because in those days there were no benches or other seats provided for the students of the schools ; but, if they wished to sit down, they brought with them bundles of straw.

CANTO XI.

V. 37.—“*One was seraphic in love’s burning mght.*”

St. Francis, born at Assisi, in 1182. His father, Peter Bernardone, was a merchant in good circumstances, but so occupied with his business as rather to neglect his son’s education. The French language, however, was considered a useful acquisition to a merchant ; therefore the boy was taught it, and acquired it so rapidly and perfectly that he was called *Francis*, or the *Frenchman*, his real name being John. In his youth he seems to have been fond of innocent amusements, and eager to make money, though extremely liberal to the poor. At the age of twenty-four, he had a severe illness, from which he rose completely changed. Soon after this, he took a journey to Rome, and, seeing the beggars who then, as now, throng the entrances of the churches, he gave his clothes to one of them, and putting on his rags, sat all day among these beggars, “feeling an extraordinary joy and comfort in his soul.” It is quite conceivable that, besides the idea of beggary being meritorious, there may have been a kind of wild, Bedouin pleasure in this first experiment of it ; and I have heard others confess that it is so. I have been told, by no less eminent a person than Cardinal Antonelli himself, that he had sometimes gone, bare-footed in the depth of winter, dressed in the penitent’s garb (which, as is well known, covers the whole face and form), and begged, “just for curiosity, and to know how it felt ;” and that it was not at all disagreeable ! But the mortifications and hardships of St. Francis were very real and very conscientious. He had first to encounter the anger of his parents, incurred, as one cannot but think, justly in the first instance. For, wishing

to repair the church of St. Damian, which was old, and ready to fall, he took a horse-load of cloth out of his father's warehouse, and sold it, with the horse, at Foligno. He then took the money to the priest, who, very properly, refused to receive it ; whereupon Francis put it in at the window. His father, hearing what had been done, came in a rage to St. Damian's, but was somewhat pacified upon recovering his money, which he found in the window. Francis, to shun his anger, had hid himself ; but, after some days spent in prayer and fasting, appeared again in the streets, so disfigured and sorrily clad, that the people gathered round him in crowds, thinking him mad. His father, more enraged than ever, took him home, beat him unmercifully, put fetters on his feet, and locked him up, till his mother set him at liberty, when his father had gone out. Francis went back to St. Damian's ; and his father following him thither, insisted that he should either return home and behave like other people, or immediately renounce before the bishop all share in his inheritance. This latter alternative he gladly accepted, gave his father whatever he had in his pockets, and went with him before the bishop of Assisi, to make the legal renunciation required. Being come into his presence, Francis, impatient of delay, while the instrument was drawing up, stripped himself of his clothes, and gave them to his father, saying : " Hitherto I have called you father on earth ; but now I say with more confidence, Our Father who art in heaven, in whom I place all my hope and my treasure." The bishop, moved even to tears, covered him with his cloak, and ordered some garment or other to be brought in for him. The cloak of a country labourer, a servant of the bishop's, was procured, and the saint received it with many thanks, made a cross on it with chalk, and put it on. This was in 1206, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. He then went to Gubbio, where

one who knew him took him into his house, and gave him a suit of clothes. When at Gubbio, he devoted himself to tending the lepers, and dressing their sores : at Assisi he begged for alms to restore different churches ; and also worked at these restorations with his own hands. Afterwards he retired to a little church called Portiuncula, belonging to the Benedictines of Subiaco, who gave it that name because it was built on a small piece of ground which belonged to them. It stands in an open plain at the foot of the hill of Perugia, about ten miles from that city, and one from Assisi ; and was at that time in a very ruinous condition. Now this small chapel, and the little cell where St. Francis lived, are enclosed in the magnificent church of S. Maria degli Angeli, and are covered with a tabernacle, of which one side is painted by Perugino, the other by Overbeck. Francis had spent two years here, when, one day at mass, hearing these words of Christ, “ Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses,” he, supposing they should be applied literally, gave away his money, his shoes, and his staff, and kept only one coat, which he girt about him with a cord, saying that his body must be led with a rope, like a beast. Soon, others began to follow him, and adopt his way of life ; whereupon, in 1209, he went to Rome, and obtained a verbal approbation of his Order from Innocent III. He then, with his twelve disciples, returned to Assisi. Soon after, the Benedictines of Subiaco bestowed on him the church of the Portiuncula, (now S. Maria degli Angeli,) upon condition that it should always continue the head church of the Order. The saint refused to accept the property, and would only have the use of the place, and, in token that he held it of the monks, he sent them every year, as an acknowledgment, a basket of the small fish found in the neighbouring river. The monks always sent the friars, in return, a barrel of oil.

Francis had often felt a desire for missionary labours, and several times attempted to go and preach among the Mahometans ; but was always prevented by some means or other. At last, in 1219, having obtained the papal approbation of his mission, he set sail from Ancona, with Illuminato of Riete, and other companions ; and went to Damietta, where he proceeded to the Sultan's camp. There he offered to walk through fire, with the Mahometan Imams, in order to prove the truth of the Christian religion. The Sultan refused to allow it, saying that his priests would not run the risk, and that it would raise a sedition. Finding that his preaching produced no effect among the Saracens, he returned into Italy. His order was formally confirmed by a bull of Honorius III., dated the 29th of November, 1223 ; and its popularity was so great, that very soon there were sixty monasteries of what are now called Franciscans, though their founder himself, out of humility, called them *Minor Friars*.

Towards the Feast of the Assumption, 1224, he retired to Mount Alverno, among the Appenines of Umbria ; and there his biographers relate that, on the 15th of September, he received the *Stigmata*, or impression on his hands, feet, and side, of the five wounds of our Saviour. Two years after, October 4th, 1226, he died, lying on the bare ground, and covered only with an old cloak. On the 16th of July, 1228, he was canonized by Gregory IX.

The First Order of St. Francis, which has produced forty-five cardinals and five Popes, has two divisions : Conventional Friars, so called because they live in large convents, and have a mitigated rule ; and Observantins, who strictly observe the poverty of their founder, and live in small, mean houses and oratories. Of them there are several branches, more or less strict. The Observantins in France are called Cordeliers. The Second

Order of St. Francis is that of the Poor Clares. (*See note to Canto III.*) The Third Order was instituted in 1221, for persons of both sexes, married or single, living in the world, but united by certain rules and exercises of piety compatible with a secular state, none of which oblige under sin, but are laid down merely as rules for direction, and not binding by any vow or precept. To this Order Dante himself belonged. In the Inferno, he alludes to the “knotted cord” which he wore for a girdle; and tells how Virgil threw it into the gulf, to summon Geryon from the deep: and some commentators have explained this as signifying that, at the command of Reason, personified by Virgil, he desisted from the needless austeries he had at one time practised. Be this as it may, he died in the garb of St. Francis; and was buried, wearing it as a shroud, in the church of the Minor Friars at Ravenna. No longer within the church does he rest; but close beside it, under the blue sky, in the lonely, grass-grown street, stands the small dome that covers his tomb. And the family of his friends and patrons also sometimes adopted that garb, at the last; for there, within the church, is the sculptured form of Ostasio di Polenta, lord of Ravenna, with the calm and wondrously beautiful face shadowed by the Franciscan cowl.

Everywhere in the South is the Order most popular; and they have long disregarded that rule of their founder which enjoins that their churches shall be poor and plain. In Rome, the church of these barefooted friars stands where once stood the proud temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. At Nice, their magnificent convent towers on the heights of Cimies, shaded by its huge old ilexes. At Assisi itself, where Francis died lying on ashes, is that wonderful church, seen like a fortress from afar. There, on the walls, are those paintings by Giotto, which are said to have been suggested by Dante himself, who here, as at

Padua, probably visited the painter during the progress of the work. Tradition even says that the poet, after his death, appeared to Giotto in a dream, to give him counsel. But this was unnecessary, besides being impossible ; for the frescoes in question were painted about twenty-three years before the death of Dante. One compartment represents “the Espousals of St. Francis with the Lady Poverty.” Perhaps the most curious spot dedicated to St. Francis is the Sacro Monte of the lovely lake of Orta, with its twenty-two chapels, where the life and actions of the Saint are represented by groups of terra-cotta figures, the size of life : and sometimes startlingly life-like they are, when one comes suddenly on those wild, haggard forms, in the dim twilight, among the thick trees.

As to the settlements of the Minor Friars in England, St. Francis, in 1220, sent thither Agnello or Angelo of Pisa, with eight others, who landed at Dover, and founded their first convent at Canterbury. Their convent in London was near Newgate, and was built in 1306. Its great library was the gift of Sir Richard Whittington, lord mayor of London, in 1429. It may be observed, that the fact of a library belonging to Franciscans shows that they must have departed from the original plan of their founder, who wholly discouraged all learning, regarding it as a snare. At the Reformation, this monastery was converted into Christ-church Hospital, for the education of four hundred blue-coat boys.

Perhaps in no case have the intentions of the founder been more departed from than in that of the Franciscans. He never meant his followers to lead an idle life, subsisting wholly upon alms. On the contrary, he enjoined that they should all work, and that those who had not been taught a trade should learn one. His friars were, however, not permitted to receive money in payment, but only food, clothes, or other necessaries. His

great precept, as a teacher, was Poverty ; and his distinguishing characteristic, as a man, was Love ; Love, even of the brute creation. It is related of him that he never saw a worm or other insect on the path, without lifting it into a place of safety. Even the wild animals came to him fearlessly ; and many anecdotes are told of his extreme tenderness to all living things. Birds he especially loved ; and among them the dove was his favourite. “One day, he met a young man on his way to Sienna to sell some doves which he had caught in a snare ; and Francis said to him : ‘O good young man ! these are the birds to whom the Scripture compares those who are pure and faithful before God ; do not kill them, I beseech thee, but give them rather to me.’ And when they were given to him, he put them in his bosom, and carried them to his convent at Raviccciano, where he made for them nests, and fed them every day, until they became so tame as to eat from his hand. And the young man also had his recompense ; for he became a friar, and lived a holy life from that day forth.” Another day, “on passing through a meadow, he perceived a poor little lamb feeding all alone in the midst of a flock of goats ; and he was moved with pity, and said : ‘Thus did our mild Saviour stand alone in the midst of the Jews and Pharisees.’ He would have bought this sheep, but he had nothing in the world but his tunic ; however, a charitable man passing by, and seeing his grief, bought the lamb, and gave it to him.” Thenceforward, it accompanied him everywhere.

Sometimes those legends are tinged with the miraculous. For instance :—“A lark brought her brood of nestlings to his cell, to be fed from his hand ; and he saw that the strongest of these nestlings tyrannised over the others, pecking them and taking more than his due share of the food ; whereupon the good saint rebuked the creature, saying : ‘Thou unjust and

insatiable ! thou shalt die miserably, and the greediest animals shall refuse to eat thy flesh.' And so it happened ; for the creature drowned itself through its impetuosity in drinking, and when it was thrown to the cats, they would not touch it." This was not, however, altogether supernatural ; for few cats, unless much pressed by hunger, will eat a drowned bird. Again :— "On his return from Syria, in passing through the Venetian Lagune, vast numbers of birds were singing, and he said to his companion : 'Our sisters the birds are praising their Creator ; let us sing with them ;' and he began the sacred service. But the warbling of the birds interrupted them ; therefore St. Francis said to them : 'Be silent till we also have praised God ;' and they ceased their song, and did not resume it till he had given them permission." "On another occasion, preaching at Alviano, he could not make himself heard for the chirping of the swallows, which were at that time building their nests ; pausing, therefore, in his sermon, he said : 'My sisters, you have talked enough ; it is time that I should have my turn. Be silent, and listen to the word of God ;' and they were silent immediately." At another time, "As he was sitting with his disciple Leo, he felt himself penetrated with joy and consolation by the song of the nightingale, and he desired his friend Leo to raise his voice, and sing the praises of God in company with the bird, but Leo excused himself by reason of his bad voice ; upon which Francis himself began to sing, and when he stopped, the nightingale took up the strain, and they sang alternately, until the night was far advanced, and Francis was obliged to stop, for his voice failed. Then he confessed that the little bird had vanquished him : he called it to him, thanked it for its song, and gave it the remainder of his bread ; then he bestowed his blessing upon it, and the creature flew away." One legend more :— "A grasshopper was wont to sit and sing on a fig-tree

near the cell of the man of God, and oftentimes by her singing she excited him also to sing the praises of the Creator ; and one day he called her to him, and she flew upon his hand, and Francis said to her : ‘Sing, my sister, and praise the Lord thy Creator.’ So she began her song immediately, nor ceased till, at the father’s command, she flew back to her own place ; and she remained eight days there, coming and singing at his behest. At length the man of God said to his disciples : ‘Let us dismiss our sister ; enough, that she has cheered us with her song, and excited us to the praises of God these eight days.’ So, being permitted, she immediately flew away, and was seen no more.”

But the loving heart of St. Francis by no means expended itself wholly on the lower animals ; on the contrary, he was a signal proof of the truth that those who best love their fellow-creatures generally are most tender-hearted to the brute Creation. His great charity embraced all ; and especially those who were sick and suffering. In his youth, he had a very strong feeling of disgust and horror at leprosy ; but afterwards, during two years he tended the lepers in the hospital of Gubbio with the utmost devotion, washing and dressing their sores. The only living thing he ever treated with harshness was his own body ; and, on his death-bed, he almost reproached himself with having used too much severity to it, saying that “he had but done it, knowing his own weakness, for fear that the least indulgence might lead him astray ; but that his brethren, who were less sinful than he, might without harm be more lenient to themselves.” Truly his was a most humble and tender spirit ; and well might Dante call him “Seraphic in love’s burning might.”

V. 68.—“*With Amyclas she once was found, of old,*”

This Amyclas was, according to Lucan, a fisherman to whom Julius Cæsar applied, before the battle of Pharsalia, for a boat to convey him across the Adriatic to Antony. Secure in his poverty, he felt no fear at the voice of the conqueror before whom all men trembled.

V. 79.—“*And thus the venerable Bernard first,*”

Bernard of Quintavalle, a rich tradesman, the first follower of St. Francis, must not be confounded with either of the two celebrated Saints of the same name. It is said that he and Francis resolved to have recourse to the divine counsel before determining to what particular object they should devote themselves. Accordingly, they went into a chapel, and begged the priest to open the Gospel at random; which having done, he alighted three times on texts in praise of poverty.

V. 83.—“*Egidius and Sylvester to this strife*”

Egidius, or Giles, a man without learning, and Sylvester, a priest, were the two next disciples of St. Francis. The former joined him in 1209, and died 1272. He always lived by the labour of his hands, and would not accept alms. He was not canonised, but is mentioned in the Romish calendar as “the Blessed Giles of Assisi.”

V. 121.—“*Such was our Patriarch:*”

St. Dominic; the backslidings of whose followers St. Thomas Aquinas, himself a Dominican, proceeds to reprove.

CANTO XII.

V. 12.—“*When Juno doth command her maiden bright ;*”

Iris, or the Rainbow, one of the Oceanides ; she was daughter of Thaumas, and became the messenger of the gods, especially of Juno.

V. 14, 15.—“*Most like the words of that fair nymph of yore
Whom love consumed as sunbeams morning dew ;*”

The nymph Echo, daughter of Earth and Air. Her extreme talkativeness annoyed Juno, who therefore deprived her of the free use of speech, and permitted her only to answer such questions as were put to her. Echo afterwards fell in love with Narcissus ; and being despised by him, pined away, and was changed into a stone, which, however, still had the power of repeating sounds.

V. 28, 29.—“*From out the heart of one of these new fires
A voice” &c.*

He who is now about to speak is St. Buonaventura, a Franciscan, and commonly called the Seraphic Doctor. He here courteously praises St. Dominic, as St. Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican, has praised St. Francis. St. Buonaventura was born at Bagnoregio or Bagnarea, in Tuscany, in 1221. He, like St. Francis, was christened John ; but received the name of *Buonaventura*, or *Good luck*, at four years old, on his recovery from a dangerous illness. In 1243, being twenty-two years of age, he entered the Order of St. Francis, the same year that Thomas Aquinas entered that of St. Dominic. Shortly after, he was sent to complete his studies at Paris, under the celebrated Englishman, Alexander of Hales, surnamed “the

Irrefragable Doctor." In 1254, he was appointed to a professor's chair in the University, where he taught for two years ; then, at the age of thirty-five, he was made General of the Franciscans. In 1265, Clement IV. nominated him Archbishop of York ; but this honour he declined, and, at last, withdrew from Rome to Paris, that he might be more out of the way of the ecclesiastical preferment which he wished to avoid. But in vain ; for, some time after, he received from Pope Gregory X. a brief, by which he was nominated cardinal and bishop of Albano, one of the six suffragans of Rome ; and this brief was accompanied by an urgent message, desiring him to accept these dignities without making any difficulties. The saint accordingly set off for Rome, and the Pope sent two nuncios, with the cardinal's hat, to meet him. They found him at a convent four leagues from Florence, and employed in washing the dishes ! He desired the nuncios to hang the hat on a tree, because, his hands being wet and dirty, he could not touch it. Gregory X. came from Orvieto to Florence, and there ordained Buonaventura bishop ; and then commanded him to prepare himself to speak in the general council which, at the desire of the Emperor Michael Palaeologus, he had called to meet at Lyons for the reunion of the Greeks. This was the fourteenth general council, and the second of Lyons ; and was opened on the 7th of May, 1274. At it were present five hundred bishops, seventy abbots, James king of Arragon, and the ambassadors of the Greek Emperor, and of other Christian princes. It was on his way to this council that Thomas Aquinas died. And Buonaventura, although he lived to be present at it, and, indeed, was the first who harangued the assembly, fell ill after the third session. Despite his failing strength, he attended the fourth ; but next day became worse, and calmly expired on the 14th of July, 1274, at the age of fifty-two. Peter of Tarentaise,

a Dominican, cardinal-bishop of Ostia, afterwards Pope under the name of Innocent V., preached his funeral sermon, in which he said : “No one ever beheld him who did not conceive a great esteem and affection for him ; and even strangers, by hearing him speak, were desirous of following his counsel and advice ; for he was gentle, affable, humble, pleasing to all, compassionate, prudent, chaste, and adorned with all virtues.” He was canonised by Sixtus IV. (himself a Franciscan) in 1482.

St. Buonaventura was the Plato, as St. Thomas Aquinas was the Aristotle of the Middle Ages ; the latter was the Head of the Dogmatic, the former of the Mystic Philosophy : and Dante was deeply versed in both ; but though he seems to profess the highest allegiance to St. Thomas and the Stagirite, yet the doctrines of Plato and the mystic idealism of the Seraphic Doctor preponderate in the *Paradiso*.

This Saint was a great observer of the affinities between the mind and the outward form ; and those parts of his works which treat of Physiognomy are extremely interesting. His system is almost the same as Lavater’s.

V. 52.—“*The favour'd Callaroga doth arise,*”

Now Calahorra, in Old Castille.

V. 53, 54.—“*Neath the protection of the mighty shield,
Where ruling now, now ruled, the lion lies :*”

The shield of Castille and Leon. It has four quarterings ; the castle above the lion, the lion above the castle : as may be seen on the Spanish dollars at this day.

V. 57, 58.—“*The holy athlete, all whose life reveal'd
Love to his flock, and strength against his foes ;*”

St. Dominic, born in 1170, of the illustrious house of

the Guzmans, who still flourish in Spain ; the Duke of Medina Sidonia, as chief of the family, being the acknowledged patron of the whole Dominican Order. His father's name was Felix, *i.e. happy* ; and his mother's, Juana, derived from the Hebrew *yukan*, which is said to mean *shall be highly favoured*. Before the birth of the Saint, his mother dreamt that she brought forth a dog with a lighted torch in its mouth. It is in reference to this that the Dominicans (*Domini Canes*) are represented, in the frescoes by Simone Memmi in the Spanish Chapel in the cloisters of S. Maria Novella at Florence, as dogs chasing wolves. This church (*Santa Maria Novella*) was the first establishment of the Dominicans in Florence, some of them having been sent thither by their founder, the same year (1216) in which his Order was confirmed by Honorius III. About 1222, they were, after some removals, settled in an ancient church, the site of which is within the present conventional buildings.

But to return to St. Dominic :—It is related by his biographers that his godmother dreamt that a star shone on his forehead ; thus presaging his future greatness. It is also said that in his earliest infancy he was accustomed to rise in the night and lie on the bare ground. At seven years old, he was sent to his uncle, a priest, who instructed him. There, he was occupied in the care of the altar, of the church, &c. At fourteen, he went to the public schools of Palencia, which were soon after transferred to Salamanca, where its university, the most famous in all Spain, was founded, in the middle of the thirteenth century. At Palencia he studied for ten years. Afterwards he was made canon of Osma. From this time, he was mixed up with all the great events, all the celebrated characters of that age ; and his life, even when weeded of its apocryphal legends, reads like a romance. We find him at

Toulouse, concerting measures for the destruction of the Albigenses, with Foulques, bishop of that diocese ; no other, indeed, than our old friend Foulques of Marseilles, the Troubadour, whom we have already seen in the sphere of Venus, and who, in his early days, had chiefly occupied himself in making love to his neighbour's wife. Another time, the Saint is at the court of France, inventing the Rosary for the benefit of Queen Blanche, who, like Hannah of old, mourned because she was childless ; and the son, afterwards born, was St. Louis. Now he is in the wild solitude of Citeaux, where it is said he longed to seclude himself wholly, and so get rid of his many cares : again, he is praying, like Moses, with his hands uplifted, while Simon de Montfort massacres the heretics. At one time, we hear of him as Master of the Palace at the papal court ; at another, the grandee of Spain is receiving the shopkeeper's son of Assisi, in the convent of Preaching Friars, at Bologna ; and it is said that Francis greatly preferred the convent of Dominic to his own, as being more mean and lowly.

But perhaps the happiest part of St. Dominic's life was spent in Rome, in the quiet monastery of St. Sabina, on the lone and lovely Aventine. In the church they still show the spot where he used to sleep,—for he never had a cell nor a bed of his own. There, too, is Sassoferato's exquisitely beautiful Madonna of the Rosary, with St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Sienna. In the garden there is, I believe, an orange-tree, or, as some say, an olive, planted by St. Dominic, which is popularly believed to put forth shoots when the order is prosperous, and to droop when misfortunes occur ; but, as the precincts of the cloister are closed to all women, I have not myself inspected the wonderful tree.

Five years after the foundation of his Order, the Saint died, August 6th, 1221, of a fever, brought on by the extreme heat,

at Bologna, that hottest of all Italian towns. He was at first buried under the plain flagstones of the little church of St. Nicholas, but on the erection of the new church and convent which bear his name, his body was placed in the exquisitely sculptured tomb designed by Niccolò Pisano ; and there it remains to this day, one of the wonders of Bologna. St. Dominic was canonised by Gregory IX. in 1234. One of his contemporaries has left the following description of his personal appearance :—“ In stature, he was of moderate size ; his features regular and handsome ; his complexion fair, with a slight colour in his cheek ; his hair and beard inclining to red ; and in general he kept his beard close-shaven. His eyes were blue, brilliant, and penetrating ; his hands were long, and remarkable for their beauty ; the tones of his voice sweet, and, at the same time, powerful and sonorous. He was always placid, and even cheerful, except when moved to compassion.”

Was he often moved to compassion ? The founder of the Inquisition was a very different manner of man from the loving and tender-hearted Saint of Assisi. One condemned his fellow-creatures to the flames, because he disapproved their mode of belief ; the other lifted the very worms out of the path lest they should be trodden under foot. But, after all, it is not fair to charge St. Dominic with every cruelty of the terrible tribunal which he originated. Personally, he does not appear to have been cruel, but the contrary ; it is even said that he was struck with horror at the barbarity with which the Albigenses were treated : and, most certainly, he firmly believed that he was doing right in extirpating heresy, or what he considered as such. Besides, in those days, human life and human sufferings were held cheaper than at present. People are now more indulgent to their neighbours, and, truth to say, much more so to themselves, than they were in the olden times ; and it was

then generally allowed, by both parties, that when all other arguments failed, in a polemical discussion, burning alive might with perfect propriety be resorted to. In later and more enlightened times than the thirteenth century, Calvin condemned Servetus to the flames : and indeed, throughout all those contests, the objections of the heretics to being burnt were founded, not on the cruelty of the act in itself, but solely on its inappropriateness to their particular case.

But, however this may be, no one can deny the claims of the Dominicans to our gratitude and admiration, on the score of their contributions to art and literature. Fra Angelico, the saintly monk of Fiesole, he who could paint the hosts of Paradise, and who died of the plague caught in attending the sick, when nearly all others had fled, was a Dominican ; and so was Fra Bartolommeo, who, in the same convent of St. Mark's, in Florence, painted those works of surpassing grandeur which we now see in the Florentine galleries and in the churches of Lucca. That convent also produced Savonarola. In literature, the Dominicans boast of St. Thomas Aquinas, and many other illustrious names. In medical science and all tender offices to the sick, they were unrivalled ; not being of the same opinion with St. Bernard, who positively prohibited his monks from studying medicine, deeming it indecent and unbefitting Christian modesty ! On the contrary, when the pestilence raged and all fled in terror, the Preaching Friars, as they were called, were ever to be seen among the dead and dying. Some remnant of the Dominican love of the art of the apothecary may yet be found in the *Spezierie* or perfumeries of S. Marco and S. Maria Novella at Florence. There, after passing through magnificent rooms painted with glorious frescoes, and filled with rare old china, one enters a great hall, full of every imaginable species of essence and ointment, and the delicious, mysterious

Alkermes. Beyond that, is the laboratory—a long room looking out on a quiet garden, and filled, according to the season, with cart-loads of orange-blossoms, rose-leaves, sweet violets, thyme, and every scented flower. There the monks busy themselves with their fragrant art, surrounded with stills, retorts, and caldrons, like the alchemists of old.

In theology, the Dominicans are the Calvinists of the Romish Church ; they believe, to some extent, in predestination, while the Franciscans maintain the doctrine of free-will.

In Rome, the chief convent of Dominicans is at S. Maria Sopra Minerva ; and there Fra Angelico is buried : there too is the residence of the General of the Order, and the abode of the Inquisition.

V. 68-70.—“*Inspired, his appellation did they take
From the possessive of what thus imbued
Him wholly :*”

From *Dominicus, of the Lord.*

V. 71-75.—“*In sooth, as of the husbandman whom Christ
To aid him in his vineyard's toil did seek.
Well he appear'd familiar friend of Christ,
Since the first love in him made manifest
Was for the earliest counsel given by Christ.*”

Here, as in every other passage where the name of Christ occurs in the rhyme, Dante, from reverence, makes it end each line of the triplet ; so that no other word may rhyme with it.

V. 83.—“*With Thaddeus and the Ostian Cardinal,*”

The former is generally supposed to be Taddeo Alderotti, a Florentine, celebrated as a physician. He was a professor at

Bologna, and died there in 1299. He translated Aristotle, and wrote commentaries on Hippocrates. It is said that he asked from Honorius III., as a medical fee, a hundred gold pieces a day ; and when the Pope very naturally remonstrated against this exorbitant demand, he replied that other princes, whose lives were of less importance to Christendom, frequently paid him fifty. This flattery had its effect ; for Honorius, when cured, gave him ten thousand. Some commentators suppose Thaddeus to have been the famous lawyer Taddeo Pepoli of Bologna ; but this seems less probable.

The Ostian Cardinal was Henry of Susa, cardinal-bishop of Ostia in the thirteenth century. He is known as author of a treatise on the first five books of the Decretals.

V. 124.—“*But not of Acquasparta nor Casal:*”

Ubertino of Casale, in Piedmont, was a Franciscan who lived at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and carried the austerities of the Order to an excessive degree ; an error which, be it observed, St. Francis had always cautioned his followers against. Cardinal Acquasparta, on the contrary, was inclined to a too great indulgence and relaxation of the rules. However, he was made General of the Order in 1287. He is buried in the church of Ara Cœli, in Rome. The different views of these two Franciscans caused a schism in the Order.

V. 130.—“*Illuminato and Augustine here*”

Two of the earliest followers of St. Francis. The former was a native of Rieti, and is generally called the Blessed Illuminato. It was he who advised the Saint against keeping secret (as in his humility he wished to do) the supernatural nail-prints. The second lay dying at the same moment that St. Francis was at the last extremity ; and when the Saint expired, his disciple

exclaimed : “Stay, I follow thee !” and his soul passed away almost at the same moment with that of his beloved friend and master.

V. 133.—“*Pier Comestor here doth with us meet :*”

Petrus Comestor or Mangiador ; *i. e.*, the Eater. It is not certain whether his voracious appetite entitled him to this name, or from what cause it was bestowed. Tiraboschi thinks Mangiador was really his name, and that his family was originally of San Miniato. He himself was, however, born at Troyes, where he became a priest, and afterwards dean. In 1164, he was made Chancellor of the University of Paris, and died in that city, in the abbey of St. Victor, about 1198. He wrote the Historia Scholastica, a sacred history of the world from the Creation to the end of the Apostolic times.

V. 134.—“*The Spaniard Peter, who twelve volumes wrote ;*”

Peter, called the Spaniard, was in reality a Portuguese. He was the son of a physician in Lisbon, and studied medicine, theology, and philosophy. He became Cardinal-Archbishop of Tuseulum in 1273, and Pope in 1276, under the name of John XXI. ; but, eight months and eight days after, he was killed by the falling of the roof, in one of the rooms in the episcopal palace at Viterbo. He wrote, besides some medical works, a treatise on logic.

V. 135.—“*And Hugo of St. Victor us doth greet.*”

Hugh of St. Victor, one of the greatest of the mystic theologians of the twelfth century, was born in 1097 ; but the place of his birth is not very clearly ascertained. Landino says he was of Pavia ; Venturi calls him a Saxon ; and Lombardi and

Alban Butler mention Ypres as his native place. It seems best authenticated, however, that he was born at Halberstadt, in Saxony, of the family of the Counts of Blankenbourg, and was educated at Pavia. Be this as it may, he lived and taught, for the last twelve years of his life, in the learned abbey of St. Victor, in Paris ; and there he died in 1142. His ten books illustrative of the Celestial Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite, are inscribed to King Louis, son of Louis le Gros, by whom the monastery had been founded. This Hugo was called a second St. Augustine.

V. 137, 138.—“*And Anselm: that Donatus, too, from whom Light fell on the first art;*”

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born at Aosta, in 1033, and studied under Lanfranc, at the monastery of Bee, in Normandy ; where he assumed the religious habit, in his twenty-seventh year. Three years after, Lanfranc was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and Anselm became prior, and then abbot of the monastery. In 1093, Lanfranc died, and Anselm was summoned to England, to succeed to the vacant Archbishopric. From this time, his life was a series of struggles with William Rufus, and Henry I. In a synod held at Westminster in 1102, he prohibited the English clergy from marrying, being the first Archbishop who had ever forbidden it. He died at Canterbury in 1109. Although fierce and bitter to his fellow-creatures, he was gentle and tender-hearted to the brute creation, as the following story testifies. “One day, a hare, pursued by the huntsmen and dogs, ran under the housings of his mule, and cowered there for refuge : the hounds stood at bay ; the foresters laughed ; but St. Anselm wept, and said : ‘This poor hare reminds me of the soul of a sinner, beset by fiends impatient to seize their prey.’ And he forbade them to pursue the creature,

which limped away, while hounds and huntsmen remained motionless, as if bound by a spell."

Donatus is *Ælius Donatus*, the grammarian, who lived in the fourth century, and was one of the preceptors of St. Jerome. He wrote a grammar which was in use during the whole of the Middle Ages. Grammar is here called "the first Art" or Science, because it was the earliest studied by youth ; being the beginning of the Trivio, or first threefold course of study, which comprised grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics. Donatus is represented in Taddeo Gaddi's frescoes in the Spanish Chapel of Santa Maria Novella, along with the symbols of Grammar.

V. 139.—“*The Metropolitan St. Chrysostom.*”

John, Archbishop of Constantinople, called *Chrysostom*, or *Golden Mouth*, on account of his wonderful eloquence, was born at Antioch, about 344. He was the only son and heir of Secundus, chief commander of the Imperial troops in Syria, who died when John was a child, leaving him to be brought up by his mother, a woman of great talents and piety. The youth, when he first grew up, pleaded at the bar, where his ready speech attracted great admiration, though he was not then twenty years of age. He, however, resolved to embrace the ascetic life; which he adopted, first, in the palace of the bishop of Antioch, to whom he was Reader, and afterwards in his mother's house. In 374, he retired into the wild Syrian mountains, and there led the life of an anchorite ; but, after six years of austerities, his health failed, and he was obliged to return into the city. In 381, he was ordained deacon by St. Meletius, and, five years after, priest, by Flavian the bishop, who appointed him his vicar and preacher. He discharged all the duties of this arduous station during twelve years, especially devoting himself to controveering different heresies. He is supposed to have usually preached

extempore, as his sentences, with all their graceful eloquence, have sometimes no grammatical conclusion ; and also because he seems to have frequently availed himself of the surrounding circumstances, or of something that had just occurred. This is observable in the celebrated sermon in which he describes the beggars he had seen on his way to church.

Chrysostom had laboured in Antioch for seventeen years when he was made Patriarch of Constantinople, February 26th, 398. For five years he fulfilled his new duties with untiring energy ; but his zeal had given offence to many, and in June, 403, he was impeached by Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, at the instigation of the Empress Eudoxia. The accusations against him were frivolous in the extreme ; the chief seeming to be that somebody (nobody could say exactly who) had heard him call the Empress *Jezebel!* If he had never done so before, he must have been sorely tempted to apply that uncomplimentary epithet now ; for, on the strength of this hearsay evidence, he was deposed and banished. But very soon, the Empress, terrified by an earthquake, had him recalled. Peace, however, did not last long between them ; for he almost immediately offended her mortally, by objecting to the games celebrated at the inauguration of her silver statue before the church of St. Sophia. He was again banished ; and in banishment he died, at Comana Pontica, in Cappadocia, on the 14th of September, 407.

V. 140.—“*And Raban, Joachim the Calabrese,*”

Rabanus Maurus was born at Mayence, studied at Tours under Alcuin, and became Abbot of Fulda, which he made the greatest nursery of science in Europe. In 847, he was made Archbishop of his native city, and died in 856. His works consist of letters, comments on the Holy Scriptures, and several dogmatical and pious treatises. The principal are his Institution of the Clergy,

and "On the Ceremonies or Divine Offices," in three books; and his Martyrology, which he compiled about the year 844. The *Veni, Creator*, is found among his writings, and in none more ancient; therefore he has sometimes been considered the author of that beautiful hymn. He is also known as having controverted the extreme doctrines of the monk Gotteschalc, respecting predestination.

Joachim, abbot of a Cistercian monastery in Calabria, was born in 1145 (or, some say, 1130), and died in 1202. During his life he was venerated as a saint, and even as a prophet, and nobody thought of doubting his orthodoxy; but, fifty years after his death, that most extraordinary book, the "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel of the Abbot Joachim," was published by an anonymous author. This Introduction purported to give, in a condensed form, the whole doctrines scattered among the different works of the Abbot; and the results were sufficiently startling. The tenets elicited were like nothing that had as yet been promulgated in the Christian Church. According to them, the New Gospel was completely to throw into the shade those of the four Evangelists; and was to be to the New Testament what the New had been to the Old. There were to be three estates of Man, three revelations of God. Judaism was that of the Father, Christianity that of the Son; the revelation of the Holy Ghost was to come, announced by the Gospel of Joachim. The Old Testament shone with the faint light of the stars; the New with the brightness of the moon; the Eternal Gospel with the glory of the sun. The Old Testament was the outer court, the New the Holy Place, the Eternal Gospel the Holy of Holies. The Pope and whole Ecclesiastical hierarchy were to be abased, and the Mendicant Orders were to reign in their stead. Thus the Introduction distinctly claimed the title of prophet for Joachim, as neither

of these two Orders had been instituted at the time of his death : St. Dominic being then a canon of Osma, living, quiet and unknown, in his native Spain ; while St. Francis was selling cloth, and amusing himself at Assisi. But here St. Francis was raised, not merely into the Apostle of this New Gospel, but even (with reverence be it said) into something very nearly approaching the Messiah himself. And, with this light thrown on the subject, it is curious to study the later and more apocryphal legends of St. Francis, and observe the efforts to draw an irreverent parallel between him and the Saviour ; a parallel from which the lowly saint would have shrunk with horror. At Orta especially, this kind of imitation of the life of Christ is very apparent ; and it is remarkable that St. Francis is, as far as I am aware, the only saint who has a sacred mount dedicated to him ; the Sanctuary of Varallo being dedicated to our Saviour, and that of Varese to the Virgin Mary, as the Madonna of the Rosary.

The effect produced by this Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel may be imagined. Everybody was aghast. It was a great deal worse than if it had been a new heresy ; for here were writings which they had read, admired, and quoted for half a century, and which, moreover, they had greatly valued because the prophecies contained therein were supposed to tend to the discomfiture of the Emperor Frederick II. ! And now it was evident that they were, and always had been, most impiously and abominably heretical. The Pope, Alexander IV., commanded the Introduction to be instantly and totally destroyed, and threatened the possessors of it with excommunication, unless they brought it in and burnt it within a stated time. Nobody could find out who had written it : the Franciscans accused the Dominicans ; the Dominicans retorted on the Franciscans. At last it was pretty well ascertained to be

by John of Parma, General of the Franciscans, who was accordingly deposed, and St. Buonaventura appointed in his stead. But now the Franciscans, when they found it useless to disclaim the authorship of the heterodox work, turned round and began to uphold its doctrines : the more it was prohibited, the more they defended and promulgated it ; and tenets which had most probably never been taught or believed for a moment by the Calabrian Abbot, were announced as undoubted truths. It would appear that John of Parma not only twisted Joachim's opinions to serve his own purposes, but even interpolated passages referring to the Mendicant Orders. In the midst of all this, during the pontificate of Boniface VIII., arose another interpreter of the Abbot, viz., John Peter Oliva, who wrote a comment on the Apocalypse, greatly resembling the Eternal Gospel, and boldly announcing St. Francis as the angel of the opening of the sixth seal, and even as the second Christ.

It is remarkable that Dante, although he makes St. Buonaventura reprove the degeneracy of his Order, never once alludes to this fiery discussion which had gone on in his own day, but quietly places Joachim in Heaven, beside St. Chrysostom. Probably he did not consider the Abbot responsible for the heresies of his interpreters.

CANTO XIII.

V. 14.—“*Most like the garland Minos’ daughter wore,*”

Ariadne, daughter of Minos, king of Crete, received from Bacchus a crown of seven stars, which after her death were changed into a constellation.

V. 18.—“*Which swifter one, and one more slowly bore:*”

In the original :

“*Che l'uno andasse al prima e l' altro al poi.*”]

This has been generally explained as meaning that the outer circle turned in one direction, and the inner in another. But Dante in the preceding canto compares the two starry garlands to words and their echo ; now, no echo repeats words backwards, but on the contrary in exactly the same manner in which they were originally said. Besides, in the spoken Italian of the present day, “al prima e al poi” would, I think, mean motion following in the *same* direction (but a little after in point of *time*, not of *place*). Yet so many and so weighty are the authorities on the other side, that I should have hesitated to differ from them, had I not met with a commentary which says that this reading of “al prima e al poi” for the *opposite* direction was a novelty, and received with much applause as being more spirited and original ; though the writer confesses that the old meaning, (of the *same* direction) might have very well remained.

Bianchi also says that this passage is to be understood thus : “that one garland of stars should shine within another, and that both should turn in such a manner that one shall go *before*, and the other *after*.” He goes on to observe that Dante says in his Convito : “Il tempo è numero di movimento secondo *prima e poi* :” *poi* thus here signifying *dietro* or *dopo*, not *indietro* ; which latter meaning, indeed, I do not think it often bears ; at least, not in ordinary modern Italian. I have therefore ventured to suppose that this passage may mean that the two circles seemed to turn with exactly the same velocity ; but that the outer wreath, having a larger orbit to fulfil, really, of course, had the swiftest motion ; as the outer edge of a wheel must

revolve more rapidly than the inner. Dante elsewhere uses this simile himself. But I offer this with diffidence, merely as a suggestion.

V. 23, 24. ————— “*as Chiana's flow
Is duller than the sky of swiftest glance.*”

The Chiana, anciently Clanis, which flows past the heights of Chiusi. Though no longer forming a stagnant marsh, its waters, from the levelness of the valley, are sluggish in their course.

V. 52-54.—“*For all that dies, and all that cannot die,
Is but a splendour of the idea erst
Brought forth by God in His great charity.*”

Since St. Augustine, the Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of the ideas of all things in the mind of God, had been almost the accredited doctrine of the Church.

V. 60, 61.—“*And through Eternity remaineth One,
Though in nine Substances shines forth its light.*”

That is, the Glory of God, which dwells, one and indivisible, in the Empyrean, is yet revealed in the nine lower spheres.

V. 125.—“*Melissus, Bryso, and Parmenides.*”

Melissus, a philosopher of Samos, who believed the world to be infinite and immovable, and all things to be one. According to his doctrines, no one could advance any argument upon the power or attributes of Providence, all human knowledge being weak and imperfect. This last opinion seems scarcely to deserve the severe censure which Thomas Aquinas, following the footsteps of Aristotle, here bestows. Melissus flourished about 440 b.c. Themistocles was among his pupils.

Bryso, a mathematician, attempted to pass on the world a sophistical demonstration that the circle could be squared.

Parmenides, like Melissus, believed all things to be one and at rest, and the universe to be wholly immoveable. He also maintained that there were only two elements, fire and earth ; and that the first generation of mankind were produced by the sun. He lived about 505 years before the Christian era.

V. 139.—“*Nor think Dame Bess and Master Martin’s eyne.*”

Used here for common, gossiping people in general.

CANTO XIV.

V. 36.—“*A voice as soft, perchance, as that which fell,*” &c.

He who speaks thus softly is Solomon.

V. 83, 84. — “*I saw myself upborne,*

With my fair Dame, to higher shores of song.”

To the sphere of Mars.

V. 97-100. — “*As the glistening Milky Way,*

Sprinkled with greater and with lesser light,

From pole to pole doth in white radiance stray

With doubt perplexing sages.”

Many were the opinions held by sages and poets, by wise and foolish, respecting the origin of the Galaxy. The Pythagoreans represented it as the tracks of the many stars that had fallen from heaven ; the followers of Anaxagoras and Democritus as a faint light from those stars which are screened from the sun by

the earth's intervention : while Aristotle believed it to be formed by inflammable vapours, like those which he supposes in the tails of comets, and in halos and perihelia, but congregated in great numbers where the stars are thickest. These were the views of philosophers ; but the poets, and, following them, the people, explained it otherwise. Some said it was the burnt-up track of Phaëton's chariot-wheels : others related that Jupiter once placed the infant Hercules in Juno's bosom when she was asleep ; and that some of her milk fell on the earth, and changed the purple lilies to a beautiful white ; and some fell on the sky, and it too became white, and was ever after called the Milky Way.

V. 102, 103.—“*The holy sign now form'd which doth unite
The quadrants in the circle.*”

The Cross.

CANTO XV.

V. 25-27.—“*Even so, if true our mightiest Muse's strain,
Of old, Anchises' shade appear'd, when he
Perceived his son on the Elysian plain.*”

Alluding to the passage in Virgil, where Æneas meets the shade of his father, in Elysium.

V. 31.—“*Thus spake this light.*”

Cacciaguida, great-great-grandfather of Dante.

V. 88.—“*O mine own leaf.*”

In the original, “*O fronda mia,*” following the simile of a plant.

V. 91, 92. — “*the man who gave to thee
Thy name.*”

The son of Cacciaguida was called Alighiero, and from him all the family adopted it as a surname.

V. 109, 110.—“*Nor Monte Mario was thrown in shade
By your Uccellatoio yet.*”

The Uccellatoio is, I believe, a hill on the Bologna road, commanding a view of Florence similar to that of Rome from Monte Mario. Ariosto said that if all the villas which are scattered round Florence were collected within one wall, two Romes could not equal one Florence.

V. 112.—“*Then saw I Bellincionë Berti go.*”

The father of “the good Gualdrada,” mentioned in the Inferno, Canto XVI., and great-grandfather of that Guido-guerra whom Dante has already met beneath the fiery shower in Hell.

V. 115.—“*And Nerli and Il Vecchio's house.*”

These are mentioned by Villani as among the oldest Florentine families. Riccobaldo of Ferrara relates that, in Florence, as late as Frederick II.'s time, “the men wore plain leather coats, without borders either of woollen cloth or of leather.” Also, he gives other amusing particulars: for instance, it was customary for a man and his wife to dine off the same plate; two or three cups were considered a sufficiently ample set of china for one household; and meals were often taken by the light of a torch, which was held by a servant. It seems a curious piece of economy to keep a servant to hold one's candle, instead of buying a candlestick.

V. 128.—“*Cianghella then, or Lapo Salterel.*”

Cianghella was a Florentine lady, of the rich and powerful Della Tosa family : she married one of the Alidosi of Imola, and in her widowhood led a very scandalous life, besides being exceedingly violent and shrewish in her temper.

Lapo Salterello was a Florentine lawyer, who was exiled at the same time as Dante : in the sentence pronounced against the latter, March 10th, 1302, among the others who were condemned, appears the name of “Dominum Lapum Salterelli judicem.” Commentators tell us that he was a cheat, a prodigal, of bad morals, and most *recherché* elegance in his style of hair-dressing : for which reason Dante opposes him to Cincinnatus, named from his neglected locks. In an interesting drama written a few years ago by Paolo Ferrari, and entitled, “Dante at Verona,” the character of Lapo is drawn with much comic power, and probably also with historical accuracy. Certainly, Dante seems to have most cordially detested him.

V. 136.—“*My brothers were Moront and Elisee.*”

Leonardo Aretino says in his Life of Dante : “This Messer Cacciaguida had two brothers, one called Moronto, the other Eliseo. Of Moronto we hear of no issue ; but of Eliseo descended that family called the Elisei.”

V. 137, 138.—“*My wife came forth from out the Vale of Po ;
From her was ta'en the surname borne by thee.*”

The wife of Cacciaguida was Aldighiera degli Aldighieri of Ferrara. The son born of this marriage was named Aldighiero, from his mother ; and thence his descendants were called *Aldighieri*, afterwards softened into *Alighieri*.

V. 139.—“*Then with the Emperor Conrad did I go.*”

Conrad III., of the house of Hohenstaufen. Cacciaguida joined his army, and was slain in Syria, during the second Crusade, which was preached by St. Bernard in 1147.

CANTO XVI.

V. 10, 11.—“*Then with the you that Romans first did learn,
And which but little now in Rome we hear.*”

It would seem that the Romans were the first among the Italians who employed *you*, instead of *thou*; but at the time of Dante they no longer did so. Landino says: “Almost all nations say *you*, though addressing an individual; but the Romans say *thou* to everybody.” In Rome, at the present day, though *thou* is used only in speaking to children, and among relations or very intimate friends, *you* is scarcely ever heard; being employed only in speaking to servants and shopkeepers. In society, everybody, man and woman, addresses each other in the third person singular *feminine!* And to do otherwise is considered a proof of being “*senza educazione*,” i.e., without education.

V. 14, 15. — “*like her who made the sign
At the first fault we read of Guinevere.*”

The lady of Malehault, in the Romance of the Round Table, who, by her coughing, emboldened Queen Guinevere to allow the first kiss of Sir Lancelot of the Lake.

V. 25.—“*And tell me of the sheepfold of St. John.*”

Florence, so called because under the protection of St. John the Baptist.

V. 37, 38.—“*Five hundred, fifty times, and three, was given
This planet to the course it aye doth trace.*”

Many dissertations have been written on this passage ; and some suppose that instead of *three, thirty* shculd be read ; which would give 580 revolutions of the planet Mars, instead of 553. The Accademia della Crusca, however, has decided that the correct reading is *three* ; and that Dante, either really believing Mars to fulfil its course in two years precisely, or (what is more probable) disregarding the niceties of calculation, and speaking in a general way, places the birth of Cacciaguida in the year 1106 : in which case he was forty-one at the time of the second Crusade. But as the revolution of Mars is in reality fulfilled in 686 days, 22 hours, and 29 minutes, some commentators, wishing to make Dante appear a more exact calculator, have preferred the reading of *thirty* ; which, upon this computation, would make the date of Cacciagnida’s birth about 1090 or 1091 : so that he must have been fifty-six or fifty-seven when he went with Conrad to the Holy Land. Either of these suppositions may be correct : but some of the old commentators make the rough calculation of two years for the revolution of Mars, and yet persist in reading *thirty* for *three* ; thereby placing the birth of Cacciaguida in 1160, *i. e.*, thirteen years after his death !

V. 41, 42.—“*Where first the sixth division doth appear,
Of those through which doth run your annual
race.*”

Seven hundred years ago, as at this day, Midsummer Eve, being the Festival of the patron saint of Florence, was cele-

brated there with games and races. It is true, in those olden times, the illuminated dome of the Cathedral did not as yet rise into the dark midnight air, like an alabaster lamp ; but then, even as now, there were races of riderless horses, like those of the Roman Carnival : and the course was, and still is, in the same direction as the numbering of the divisions of the city, that is, from west to east. Those divisions were six in number, beginning at the newest part of Florence, farthest down the Arno, and proceeding against the course of the stream ; and in the sixth and last division, where the races ended, was the house of Dante's ancestors.

V. 43.—“*This of my ancestors enough to hear.*”

It is uncertain why Cacciaguida forbids Dante to inquire any further concerning his ancestors : it could scarcely be that there was anything in their history which he would have disliked to hear ; for the sixth division of the city was that where all the most ancient families lived, having been the first rebuilt in the time of Charlemagne. Possibly, Cacciaguida meant to reprove Dante for his pride of birth, and his love of tracing his ancestry back to the Romans.

V. 47.—“*Then, 'twixt the Baptist and the God of War.*”

That is, as is generally understood, between the Baptistry and the broken statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio ; these being the ancient limits of Florence. But Venturi supposes this description to relate to time, not to place ; and to mean that at no period between the first foundation of the city under the Romans (when Mars was its tutelar deity), and the days of Cacciaguida was the population more than a fifth of what it was in Dante's time.

V. 50.—“*With Campi, and Certaldo, and Figghine.*”

Campi, a small place between Prato and Florence, with a fine old castle. Figghine, perhaps Figline near L’Incisa, in Val d’Arno, between Florence and Arezzo. Certaldo, the home and burial-place of Boccaccio, in Val d’Elsa, between Florence and Sienna.

V. 54.—“*And at Gallutz and Trespian, I ween.*”

Two small places quite close to Florence, Galluzzo on the south, and Trespiano on the north towards Bologna.

V. 56.—“*Of Aguglionë’s boor within your wall.*”

“Aguglionë’s boor” is Messer Baldo of Aguglione, a castle in Val di Pesa, who was one of those who falsified the public accounts (see Purgatorio, Canto XII., note to v. 106). He had previously (in 1294) conspired against Giano della Bella.

V. 57, 58.—“*And him of Signa, whose sharp eyes do wink
At all injustice.*”

One Bonifazio of Signa, a lawyer greatly devoted to money-making, without much scruple as to the means.

V. 62-64.—“*One who in Florence now doth buy and sell,
Should hie to Semifontë, ’neath whose vine
His grandsire begg’d for alms.*”

Semifonte, a castle in Val d’Elsa, taken and destroyed by the Florentines in 1202, through the treachery of a sentinel. He was killed by his comrades, during the assault; but his children were, in recompense, allowed to settle in Florence tax-free. Dante here sneers at the descendants of the traitor.

V. 65. — “*the Count should Montemurlo sway.*”

Montemurlo, an ancient castle of the Counts Guidi, between Pistoia and Prato. Its masters were obliged to sell it, in 1208, to the Florentines, not being themselves able to defend it against Pistoia.

V. 66, 67.—“*The Cerchi in Aconë yet might dwell,
In Valdigrevë Buondelmonte.*”

The Cerchi were a wealthy and newly ennobled family of Florence, who, in Dante's time, were at the head of the Bianchi party. One of them, Vieri de' Cerchi, distinguished himself greatly at the battle of Campaldino; although he was at that time, says Villani, “malato di sua gamba,” that is, “ill of his leg;” but whether this illness was gout, or what, is not stated. He seems to have become less enterprising, with age; for, some years later, his dilatoriness and vacillation was the ruin of his party in Florence, and the cause of Dante's exile: and it has been suggested, by an eminent living authority, that this Vieri de' Cerchi, and not Pope Celestine V., was he who made the “gran rifiuto,” and who, for his cowardly hesitation, is placed by Dante among those scorned alike by Heaven and Hell. Corso Donati married the sister of Vieri de' Cerchi, but afterwards became his bitter enemy.

Acone lay in the Val di Sieve, at a short distance from Florence towards the north-east. The Cerchi originally lived there; but came to Florence in 1153, where they did some good deeds and many evil ones. The story of Buondelmonte is well known. (See Purgatorio, Canto VI., note to v. 80.)

V. 74.—“*On Urbisaglia's and on Luna's might.*”

Urbisaglia, the ancient Urbs Salvia, near Macerata, in the March of Ancona; it was destroyed by Attila. Of the ancient

Luna not a trace remains ; but the modern Spezzia has now succeeded to its maritime importance, in some degree. Dante, when he meets the Etruscan augur Aruns, in Hell, alludes to “the hills of Luna ;” namely, the lovely Carrarra Mountains, with their white marble summits.

V. 76.—“*Chiusi and Sinigaglia.*”

Chiusi, the ancient Clusium, the city of Lar Porsena, which towers like a fortress, high above the Val di Chiana, has, in truth, much decayed from its ancient greatness, and possesses, I fearlessly assert, one of the worst inns in Europe. Yet is it a most interesting place. There, among thick and seemingly boundless forests, is the tomb of Porsena himself. There, too, are other and scarcely less interesting sepulchres ; in one of which, when first opened, was a garland of golden oakleaves, encircling the whole interior. The golden wreath is gone ; but the calm Etruscan figures are still there, some sleeping on their pillows, some with head raised, and dignified aspect : and all this among the bright glades of the great, old oak wood. The town itself is not now very attractive : but the Bishop’s garden (for Chiusi is still a bishopric) commands a magnificent view over the Val di Chiana, and is a pleasant place withal, though not at all like an English garden ; being, in fact, only a tangled mixture of roses and cabbages, of figs and almond-trees.

Sinigaglia, the ancient Sena Gallica, in the March of Ancona, is less decayed than the other cities here mentioned. The present Pope, Pius IX., was born there.

V. 82, 83.—“*And as the moon with her unresting tide
Doth now conceal and now reveal the shore.*”

Probably, Dante had observed this at Venice ; for in the Bay of Naples and on the Tuscan Coast there is no tide.

V. 88.—“*I saw the Ughi, Catellini’s name.*”

Two noble families extinct in Dante’s time.

V. 89.—“*Filippi, Greci, Orman, Alberic.*”

All these families were extinct in Dante’s time, except the Ormanni, who were then called Foraboschi; they were Guelphs.

V. 91.—“*Dell’ Arca saw I, and Sannella eke.*”

The Dell’ Area family was descended from a companion of Catiline, but, like the others above mentioned, had become extinct before the days of Dante. Sannella, another noble Florentine family, probably also extinct.

V. 93.—“*With Soldanier, Ardinghi, and Bostic.*”

The Soldanieri, an ancient Ghibelline family of Florence, one of whom, Gianni Soldanieri, Dante has already met among the traitors frozen in the ice, in Antenora. This family, unlike most of those here mentioned, still existed when Dante wrote. They had the singular privilege of being buried on bronze horses. The Ardinghi were Guelphs, as also the Bosticchi, who no longer existed.

V. 94-99.—“*Above the gate which now, in sooth, doth hold
Guilt which so heavy on the bark hath lain,
That o'er it soon the billows shall have roll'd,
The Ravignani dwelt; from whom a train
Came forth, Count Guido, and whoe'er the name
Of Bellincionë hath thereafter ta'en.*”

That is, above the gate of S. Piero, from which was named the *Sesto* or *Sestiera* (the sixth part of the city) in which Dante

resided, and which now contained the rival houses of the Cerchi and the Donati, whose dissensions continually disturbed Florence, there dwelt, in the days of Cacciaguida, the Ravignani, one of the most noble Florentine families. Although long settled in Florence they would appear, from their name, to have originally come from Ravenna; but, like the Dell' Arcas, they claimed descent from one of the companions of Catiline. From the Ravignani came Bellincionë Berti, whom Cacciaguida has mentioned in the preceding Canto with approbation, on account of his simple life; and whose daughter, "the good Gualdrada" married a Guido: thus the Count Guido here referred to as a descendant, through her, of the Ravignanis, may possibly be Guidoguerra, whom Dante has previously met in Hell.

V. 100-102.—“*Already Pressa well fulfill'd his claim
Of skill in governing; and Galigai
A gilded sword-hilt wore.*”

These two Ghibelline families also claimed descent from the companions of Catiline. The former had, however, merged into the plebeian order. It is not exactly known who the individual was whom Dante here speaks of as having skill in governing. The Galigai do not appear to have become extinct; as, later, in the days of Marie di Medici, we hear of her friend and favourite, Leonora Galigai, ruling her absolutely; she it was who, when asked by what sorcery she governed the Queen, replied: “By the power of a strong mind over a weak one.”

The gilded sword-hilt was the badge of nobility; and probably the family in question had only just attained that rank. The name Galigai signifies *furrier*.

V. 103. — “*the Ermine column high.*”

The Pigli, or Billi, had for armorial bearings an ermine or miniver column on a red field. This family most probably at one time resided in Lombardy ; as one of the principal streets in Milan bears their name, the Contrada de' Bigli.

V. 104, 105.—“*Giuochi, Sifanti, and Barucci ; those
Who blush for the false measure now for aye.*”

The Giuochi had merged into the plebeian order ; the Barucci were extinct. From the Sifanti or Fifanti had come Oderigo or Arrigo, one of the murderers of Buondelmonte. Dante had previously inquired of Ciacco, whom he met among the gluttonous in Hell, concerning the fate of this Arrigo, and is told that he is in a lower deep, where however we hear no more of him. Those who blush for the false measure are the Chiaramontesi. (See Purgatorio, Canto XII., note to v. 106.)

V. 106, 108.—“*Sacchetti, Galli : and the plant, whence grows
Calfucci, flourish'd ; to the curule chair
Sizi and Arrigucci then arose.*”

Of the Sacchetti and Galli little is known : the plant from whence the Calfucci grew is the Donati family, of which the Calfucci were a branch. Some members of the Sizi and Arrigucci generally filled the highest offices of the State, in Cacciaguida's time. In those days Florence had a college of consuls, composed of a senior and assistants, whose entire number corresponded to the *Sestiere*, or districts of the city ; and who governed in connection with a hundred senators. This institution dated from about the beginning of the twelfth century, when the Tuscan municipalities first grew independent of the Imperial dukes or marquises, and lasted till the year

1207, when the management of affairs was committed to a foreign Podestà. One of the Arrigucci is found to have been chief consul in 1197 ; and one of the Sizi in 1190, and another in 1203.

V. 109-112.—“*How many saw I erst of those who were
Undone by pride ! And in each greatest deed
Of Florence flower'd, like golden blossoms fair,
The gilded balls.*”

Those undone by pride are supposed to be the Uberti. But the two last lines seem like a prophecy. It is true, the armorial bearings here mentioned were those of the Lamberti family ; but a more celebrated shield than theirs afterwards bore the golden balls ; and we see them in Florence, in churches, galleries, and palaces ; and not only in Florence, but all over Italy, wherever there is anything gorgeous in magnificence, or beautiful in art : we see them in the Vatican and St. Peter's itself ; for Sovereigns, Cardinals, and Popes, have borne that escutcheon, the golden balls of the apothecary's descendants, the house of Medici.

V. 113-115.—“*The sires of those who, when your see doth stand
Unoccupied, grow fat the while they feed,
Deliberating. The presumptuous band,*” &c.

The sires of the Visdomini and Tosinghi, who had the privilege of enjoying the episcopal revenues, from the death of one bishop till the appointment of another ; and who, consequently, were in no hurry to fill up the vacancy. “The presumptuous band,” who were so fierce to the weak, and so abject to the strong, were the Adimari, Dante's greatest enemies. They occupied his house and goods during his exile, and, naturally enough under the circumstances, vehemently opposed

all proposals for his recall to Florence. One of them married a daughter of Bellincione Berte, to the great annoyance and indignation of Ubertin Donati, who had married another of Bellincione's daughters, and considered the alliance with the upstart family of the Adimari as a degradation.

V. 122.—“*The Caponsacchi from Fiesole.*”

The Caponsacchi family, originally of Fiesole, lived in the Mercato Vecchio, in Florence. A daughter of this house married Folco Portinari, and became the mother of Dante's Beatrice.

V. 125.—“*By Jude and Infangato.*”

This Jude was Giuda Guidi, of the noble house of the Counts Guidi, who originally possessed the castle of Santa Croce, taken from them by the Florentines in 1153. Of the Infangati, it is known only that they were a noble Florentine family.

V. 128, 129. — “*a gate which had its name, of old,
From him of Pera.*”

The Porta Peruzza, one of the old postern-gates of Florence. Cacciaguida here intimates that the jealousy of the citizens in Dante's time would not have permitted such an honour to a private family, as to give its name to one of the gates.

V. 129, 130. — “*Those to whom it fell
To wear the blazon of the Baron bold,*” &c.

The families of Pulci, Nerli, Gangalandi, Giandonati, and Della Bella, who in their arms quartered those of Baron or Marquis Hugo, vicar in Tuscany for the Emperor Otho III. His history runs thus : “It came to pass, as pleased God, while

he was hunting in the demesne of Buonsollazzo, that he lost sight of his companions in the wood, and alighted, so it appeared to him, at a smithy where iron is forged. And seeing there some black, misshapen wights, who seemed to be tormenting, not iron, but men, with flames and hammers, he asked what the thing meant, and was told these were damned souls, and that the soul of Marquis Hugo, for his worldly life, was condemned to the like pains, if he did not avert his doom by penitence. Hereat, in great alarm, he commended himself to the Virgin, and remained after the vision so pierced with contrition, that on his return to Florence he sold all his patrimony in Germany ; and he built seven abbeys, of which the first was the abbey at Florence, in honour of St. Mary ; and all these he richly endowed.” This abbey of St. Mary is no other than the well-known Badia of Florence, close to Dante’s house. The chronicler goes on to relate that Marquis Hugo “died at Florence on St. Thomas’s day, in the year of our Lord 1006, and was buried in the Badia with great pomp.” There, it would appear, the anniversary of his death was still solemnised in Dante’s time ; and, I believe, even now, on St. Thomas’s day, Hugo’s coat of arms is exposed in the church.

Those mentioned above who quartered his arms (red and white stripes) with their own, were not related to him, but adopted them “for love,” because the Marquis had made many knights of those families.

V. 134, 135.—“*Though with the people now he casts his lot,
Who bears it bound with gold.*”

Giano della Bella, who, enraged at the insolence of the great, was (in 1293) the mover of “the edict of justice,” by which the nobles were excluded from power. But afterwards, pursued by the envy and hatred of the patricians whom he had offended,

and not greatly trusting to the favour of the people, he chose a voluntary exile, left Florence on the 5th of March, 1295, and died in France.

V. 136. —— “*Importuni then, and Gualterot.*”

Two families resident in the Borgo Santi Apostoli.

V. 139.—“*The house whence came your sorrow and your strife.*”

The Amidei ; from whose murder of Buondelmonte originated all the strife of Guelphs and Ghibellines.

V. 146. —— “*if unto Ema’s stream,*” &c.

The Ema is a small stream which flows between Montebuoni (the estate of Buondelmonte), and Florence. Cacciaguida here says it would have been well had Buondelmonte been drowned in this stream the first time he endeavoured to cross it.

V. 149, 150.—“*That Florence owed unto the shatter’d stone
Which guards the bridge, a victim.*”

It was an old belief that the bloody quarrels which ravaged Florence proceeded from the wrath of the demon Mars, enraged at the protectorate of the city being transferred to St. John the Baptist.

V. 155-157. —— “*the lily-flower
Ne’er on its stem did then inverted grow,
Nor wear a verneil hue by fell Division’s power.*”

The arms of Florence were originally white lilies on a red field ; but, after the civil wars, the Guelphs changed them to red lilies on a white field. In those days, when a banner was taken by the enemy, it was usual for them to bear it turned upside down, out of contempt.

CANTO XVII.

V. 1.—“*Like him who came to Clymene,*” &c.

Clymene was the mother of Phaëton by Apollo. The youth had been told by one of his companions that he was not really the son of the god; who, in order to satisfy him, allowed him to drive the chariot of the Sun, with the mischievous results so well known.

V. 46.—“*As erst Hippolytus from Athens fled.*”

Chased by the false accusations of Phædra.

V. 70-72.—“*The place of refuge where thou first may'st dwell
Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy,
Who on the Ladder bears the Eagle well.*”

Verona; where Dante was hospitably received, on two different occasions, by the Scaligers, whose escutcheon bore an eagle on a ladder; in Italian, *scala*. First, in March, 1302, when he was exiled from Florence, he at once took refuge with “the mighty Lombard”: at this time, Cangrande was only eleven years old, and his eldest brother, Bartolommeo, governed Verona. The second occasion was from 1314 to 1318; and it was during this sojourn that he wrote his celebrated letter to Cangrande, then in the height of his glory, dedicating the *Paradiso* to him, as he had already dedicated the other two parts respectively to Uguzzione della Faggiola and Moroello Malaspina. In this curious letter he says that he wishes the title-page of his work to be thus: “Here begins the *Commedia* of Dante Alighieri, Florentine in birth, not in morals.”

From this time, as long as he was at Verona, he always

showed each canto to Cangrande, as it was finished, before any one else saw it : and afterwards, when he went to Ravenna, he sent him the work in packets of six or eight cantos at once, till he came to the twentieth. Then, either because political differences had rather cooled his friendship for Cangrande, or from some other cause, he sent no more : and, at Dante's death in September, 1321, his sons, Pietro and Giacopo, thinking that his labour had been interrupted by his embassy to Venice, or that he had thrown it aside in weariness (as he often did for several months at a time), supposed that he had left his mighty work unfinished, and even tried to complete it themselves ; with what success does not appear. For, seven months after his death, it is related that Giacopo, who was the most intent on the matter, dreamt a dream which convinced him that the rest of the poem existed, if it could but be found. Still his searches were in vain ; so he went to his father's greatest friend in Ravenna, one Pier Giardino, who seems to have been more in his confidence than any one else. On Giacopo di Dante recounting his dream, Pier Giardino remembered having seen Dante put papers into a hole in the wall of his room : the two immediately proceeded thither, and found the thirteen precious cantos behind a panel, and so covered with mould, having lain there all the winter, that they were with difficulty deciphered. Thus it is that these last cantos present so many different readings in the various manuscripts.

V. 76, 77. ——— “*thou shalt look on one, imprest
By this strong star, e'en from his hour of birth.*”

Canfrancesco della Scala, commonly called Cangrande, who was only nine years old in 1300, being born March 9th, 1291. He was the youngest and the greatest of the three brothers who successively ruled Verona. He died in 1329, and his body rests

above the door of the church of S. Maria l' Antica, at Verona, near the strange and beautiful tombs of his successors.

V. 82, 83.—“*But ere the Gascon's crafty guile appears
Against great Henry,*” &c.

That is, before Pope Clement V. (who was a Gascon) should deceive the Emperor Henry VII. by his artifices. Henry of Luxembourg was elected Emperor in 1308, went to Italy in 1310, and was much thwarted by the Pope, who had at first pressed him urgently to come. Cangrande was then nineteen, and had for two years been associated in the government with his brother Alboino.

CANTO XVIII.

V. 46, 47.—“*On William and on Rinoard I bent
My glance.*”

This William was a hero rather of romance than of veracious history. On his head the Troubadors have accumulated all the warlike exploits of several different people ; for instance, among many others, those of William IX., Duke of Aquitaine, and of William, who governed Toulouse under Charlemagne, and, retiring afterwards to a cloister, is venerated as St. William of the Desert. The chroniclers, or rather romancers, say that he was Count of Orange in Provence, and son of the Count of Narbonne ; and that, in the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis le Débonnaire, he expelled the Saracens from Languedoc and Provence.

Of Rinoard, very little is known ; and here, too, the accounts are exceedingly conflicting. Pietro, Dante's son, calls him a

relation of William of Orange ; and indeed, tradition says, that he was a brother of William's wife. But, according to the romances, Rinoard was a kidnapped pagan youth, who, having been sold and brought up at the Imperial court, obstinately refused baptism, and, being considered incorrigible, was made a scullion. He afterwards entered the service of William of Orange ; and being a man of extraordinary personal strength, he used to fight only with a club, signalising himself by prodigies of valour. Though not at that time a Christian, he seems to have had no objection to fight for the Christian cause ; but at length he was converted, and obtained the hand of the Emperor's daughter. Like his commander, however, he ended his days in a convent.

V. 48.—“*Duke Godfrey, with the Cross of splendour blent.*”

Godfrey de Bouillon, King of Jerusalem, the hero of the first Crusade.

V. 49.—“*And Robert Guiscard.*”

The fierce and warlike Norman, who compelled the Pope to confer on him the investiture of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily. Leo IX. was at first determined to oppose the invaders, with every weapon, temporal and spiritual ; and, for that purpose, he gathered together an army, consisting of 500 Germans (contributed by the Emperor Henry III.) and a horde of the lowest of the populace, utterly untrained in arms. The Pope took the command in person, and opened the campaign by a pilgrimage to Monte Cassino. Then, June 18th, 1053, he engaged the enemy near Civitate (a town which existed in the Middle Ages, near the Adriatic Coast), and was instantly and totally defeated, the populace running away, and the Germans, who stood to their arms, being cut to pieces. The Pope fled to Civitate ; but

the inhabitants refused to receive him, and drove him alone from their gates. The Normans advanced, as if to take him prisoner, but knelt as they approached, imploring his pardon and benediction. Leo was conducted to their camp, where they treated him with so much respect, that he soon became reconciled to his Norman enemies, and granted Robert Guiscard the desired investiture. Robert then proceeded to subdue the Saracens, who at that time had many settlements in Calabria. Having done so, he enlisted them in his own army, and the ravages committed by those semi-Christian or wholly heathen troops were frightful. When Gregory Hildebrand summoned Robert Guiscard to help him against the Emperor Henry IV., the Saracen hordes, entering Rome, did more mischief than had been done by any previous invader. Besides being guilty of murder, rapine, sacrilege, and every crime, they deliberately broke in pieces and overthrew every building and work of art that they possibly could. Christian church and heathen temple were all the same to them, and Rome from that hour became a city of ruins.

V. 62.—“*I sped in larger orbit.*”

Dante now ascends into Jupiter; which, in the scholastic parallel between the spheres and the sciences, is compared to *Geometry*: probably because of a fancied affinity between the heaven of justice and the most exact of the sciences.

V. 82.—“*O Pegasean Goddess.*”

Calliope, the Epic Muse.

V. 94, 95. — “*When was told
All, even to the last M, they stay'd.*”

After the words *Diligite justitiam qui judicatis terram* have

been formed by the starry spirits, the last letter, *m*, remains, crowned with a glittering glory. Then this letter, the initial and symbol of monarchy, is transformed into the eagle, the emblem of the Holy Roman Empire.

V. 130, 131.—“*O thou, who but to cancel, sooth, dost guide
Thy writing.*”

That is, according to the interpretation of Bianchi, “who dost but write censures in order to be bribed to revoke them.” Thus, after the Venetians had been excommunicated for their occupation of Ferrara, then claimed by the Church, Clement V. was persuaded, in 1313, to remove the sentence upon their paying 100,000 florins.

V. 133-136. ——“*Well may'st thou say : ‘My heart doth call
On him who did a lonely portion take,
And by a dance in martyrdom did fall ;
Thus Paul I know not, nor the Fisher of the
Lake.’*”

Dante here sarcastically observes that the devotion of the Pope (Boniface VIII.) to the Baptist, as portrayed on the golden florin, was so great, that the doctrines of St. Peter and St. Paul were neglected.

CANTO XIX.

V. 115-117.—“*There, 'mong the works of Albert ye may look
For that which soon the pen shall write, whereby
Prague shall be lone, as one whom all forsook.*”

Albert of Austria, son of Rudolph of Hapsburg, invaded and

devastated Bohemia in 1303. Dante elsewhere rebukes this sovereign (in the Purgatorio, Canto VI. v. 97) for going after distant conquests, and neglecting the affairs of Italy.

V. 118-120.—“*And, there, the grief that on the Seine doth lie,
Caused by the money falsified by one
Who in the chase of a wild boar shall die.*”

The distress caused in Paris by the quantity of false money coined by Philip le Bel, who was killed in 1314, by a wild-boar running between his horse’s legs.

V. 121, 122.—“*And, there, the pride whence thirsteth every son
Of England and of Scotland for the strife.*”

Alluding to the wars of Edward I. and Robert Bruce.

V. 124.—“*The Spaniard with soft luxury so rife.*”

This is generally supposed to be Alfonso X., King of Castille and Leon. He was elected King of the Romans in 1257, but never asserted his rights; and quietly allowed Rudolph of Hapsburg to possess himself of the Imperial dignity. However, it does not appear to have been so much luxury as a love of astronomy that prevented him from attending to his terrestrial affairs. Indeed, some commentators, thinking the description here inapplicable, have suggested that Ferdinand IV., his successor, may be meant, who came to the throne in 1295, and died in 1312, at the age of twenty-four, in consequence, it is supposed, of his extreme intemperance.

V. 125.—“*And him who wears Bohemia’s diadem.*”

Wenceslaus IV., king of Bohemia. (See Purgatorio, Canto VII., note to v. 100.)

V. 127.—“*And there the Cripple of Jerusalem.*”

Charles II. of Anjou, whose *thousand* vices might be written, in Roman numerals, with an M., and whose *one* virtue, liberality, might be written with an I. (*See note to Canto VIII., v. 82.*)

V. 130-132.—“*There ye the avarice and guilt shall find
Of him who keepeth still the Isle of Fire,
Where erst Anchises his long life resign'd.*”

The avarice and guilt of Frederick of Aragon, who ruled Sicily. The expression *keepeth* seems to signify a precarious and dependent power; and in fact a treaty, concluded in 1299 by the different European powers, and basely signed by Frederick, stipulated that he “should *keep* this island during his life.”

Anchises, father of Æneas, died in Sicily, in the eightieth year of his age.

V. 133, 134.—“*To show what vileness doth in him respire,
His deeds are writ in letters curt.*”

Dante apparently thinks the Roman numerals too good for Frederick of Sicily, and that his deeds should be written in the more curt and mysterious Arabic characters. The cause of Dante’s great dislike to this prince was, that when Boniface VIII. sent Charles of Valois against Frederick, this latter, instead of fighting for his rights, recognised the decree of the Pope, acknowledged himself a feudatory, and bound himself to pay 3000 ounces of gold yearly to the Camera Apostolica. He also, as stated above, promised the succession of Sicily to the French. Afterwards, Frederick became a Ghibelline; and he and Dante were on such friendly terms that the Poet thought of dedicating the Paradiso to him. But, just then, the Emperor Henry VII.

died (in 1313), and Frederick, who had gone to Pisa with the intention of supporting the Ghibellines, lost courage, seeing that their affairs were in a bad state ; therefore, as they needed help so much, he abandoned them to their fate. From this time, Dante regarded him as the vilest of men.

V. 135, 136. —— “*The brother of his sire,
And his own brother.*”

Frederick's uncle was James, king of Majorca and Minorca ; his brother was James, king of Arragon. (See *Purgatorio*, Canto VI., note to v. 119.)

V. 139, 140. —— “*Of Portugal
And Norway shall the sovereigns' guilt be seen.*”

Dionysius, king of Portugal, who reigned between 1279 and 1325, is said by some of the old commentators to have been “wholly addicted to acquiring gain, leading nearly the life of a merchant, and having money-dealings with all the great merchants of the kingdom, like a man of whom no royal, no splendid act could be recorded.” This seems rather a prejudiced account ; as, though not a faultless monarch, he had some good qualities. Alban Butler says of him that he was a friend of justice, and a valiant, bountiful, and compassionate prince, though in his youth a worldly man. It was he who founded, with truly royal magnificence, the university of Coimbra ; and the biographer goes on to say, that his extraordinary virtues, particularly his liberality, justice, and constancy, were highly extolled by the Portuguese, and that he was the idol and glory of his people. He was, however, of an exceedingly violent and jealous disposition. Schiller has taken his beautiful ballad of Fridolin from an incident in the life of this prince ; who listened

to the envious tales of a courtier against one of his pages and his fair and saintly queen, Elizabeth, daughter of Peter III. of Arragon, grand-daughter of Manfred, and niece of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. The story is well known : how the page was sent to the lime-burners, who had previously received orders to throw into the lime-kiln him who should ask if the king's commands had been fulfilled ; how at the sound of the mass-bell the youth went into the chapel, thereby delaying his errand : and how the king, impatient to know if his orders had been executed, sent the envious courtier to the lime-kiln, who, at the fatal question, was flung in, to a horrible death.

The sovereign of Norway, here spoken of, is supposed to be Hakon the Priest-hater, who ascended the throne in 1300, and was yet reigning when Dante wrote. He carried on a long war against Denmark, by means of devastating predatory incursions, somewhat in the style of the raids of the Scottish and English borderers ; and, when not otherwise occupied, was generally engaged in a contest with the clergy.

V. 141.—“*And his who in Ragusa ruled,*” &c.

This is supposed to be Uroscius, sovereign of Ragusa, who wished to have in his dominions a coinage similar to that of Venice, then very highly prized ; but the value of the Ragusan money was much inferior, consisting in a great measure of base metal.

V. 143, 144. — “*Thou, O Hungary, wert blest,
If now no more misgovern'd thou hadst been.*”

This alludes probably to Ladislaus IV., who had misgoverned Hungary till his death in 1290. Afterwards, for seventeen years, there were perpetual contests about the succession. (See notes to Canto VIII.) From 1290 to 1300, Andrew the Venetian

might be considered to govern the kingdom, as far as it was governed at all ; and he does not appear to have been a bad ruler. But Dante was partial to the rival claims of Charles Martel and his family ; and besides, the civil wars, which grew worse after the death of Andrew, desolated the country.

V. 145.—“*And thou, Navarre, in quietness mightst rest.*”

Joanna, daughter and heiress of Henry I. of Navarre, married, in 1284, Philip le Bel ; but, as long as she lived, administered her hereditary states with absolute authority and exemplary wisdom. She died in 1304, and was succeeded by her son, Louis Hutin, in the lifetime of his father : then, after Philip’s death, Louis, having succeeded also to the throne of France, was the first sovereign who bore the title of “King of France and Navarre.”

Dante here says it would have been well for Navarre if the Pyrenees had prevented the political, as well as the geographical union of the two countries ; and with reason, for Louis ruled his maternal inheritance with great severity.

V. 149.—“*Now Famagosta and Nicosia weep.*”

Two principal cities of the island of Cyprus ; which is supposed to mourn for the wickedness of its king, Henry II. of Lusignan, who bore a lion on his shield.

CANTO XX.

V. 44, 45.

— “he

Who cheer’d the widow when her son was slain.”

Trajan.

V. 50, 51.—“*He who is nearest, in the arch supern,
Delay'd his death by truest penitence.*”

Hezekiah.

V. 55, 56.—“*The next afar the Empire erst did bear,
With good intention which had evil fruit.*”

Constantine, when he transferred the government to Byzantium. Dante supposes that, instead of being actuated by political motives, and a desire to have his metropolis in the centre of the Empire, Constantine left Rome to Sylvester, out of gratitude because he had been cured of leprosy by that hermit's prayers. (See Inferno, Canto XXVII., v. 95.)

V. 62-64. — “*William, whom the land doth still deplore
That weeps for Charles and Fred'rick bitterly,
Who still do live.*”

William the Good, king of Sicily, nephew of the Empress Constance. By his death without issue, Sicily was plunged into the long contests between the rival houses of Arragon and Anjou. At this time, Frederick of Arragon was reigning tyrannically in the island, and Charles of Anjou was making war, to regain possession of it.

V. 68, 69. — “*Ripheus of Troy doth here,
The fifth within this holy circle, glow.*”

Ripheus, a Trojan, who joined Aeneas the night that Troy was burnt; he was at last killed after having slain many Greeks. He is greatly commended for his virtues, and especially his love of justice. Virgil calls him *justissimus*.

V. 100.—“*Thou from the first star and the fifth array'd
Beneath my brow, much wonder dost receive.*”

Dante is surprised to find Trajan and Ripheus in Paradise, who were heathens.

V. 109.—“*And this reward a living hope did earn.*”

The pious hope of St. Gregory the Great.

V. 127, 128. — “*Those Maidens three,
Whom thou did'st see at the right wheel.*”

Faith, Hope, and Charity; whom Dante has seen in the terrestrial Paradise, at the right wheel of the chariot of the Church. (*See Purgatorio, Canto XXIX., v. 121.*)

CANTO XXI.

V. 13-15.—“*We to the seventh far splendour now arise,
Whose rays beneath the Lion's breast are shed
Down upon earth, in fierce and fervent guise.*”

In the month of March, 1300, Saturn, the seventh planet, was in conjunction with the zodiacal sign of Leo. Dante's frequent allusions to this sign are not the result of any abstruse astronomical or astrological studies : to this day, the common people in Italy make use of the expression “the sun of Leo,” to signify the hottest part of the summer, *i.e.* the end of July and beginning of August. Once, at Sorrento, I asked a bare-footed peasant-girl, who could neither read nor write, “when we might expect the weather to become cooler?” And the answer was : “Lady, when the sun shall no longer be in Leo.”

V. 28.—“*I saw a ladder, seeming all of gold.*”

The golden ladder of Contemplation, connecting Earth and Heaven.

V. 43.—“*And one who nearest linger'd shone so clear.*”

This is Peter Damian, who was born about the year 988, in Ravenna, of a family which, though at one time in good circumstances, was then much reduced. He was the youngest of many children, and, early losing his father and mother, was left to the care of a married brother, who treated him very ill, and sent him to keep swine. He had another brother, named Damian, who was arch-priest of Ravenna, and afterwards a monk ; and he, taking pity on him, had the charity to give him an education. Out of gratitude, he therefore called himself Damian, in addition to his original name. This brother sent him to school, first at Faenza, and afterwards at Parma. The youth then resolved to adopt a monastic life, and retired to the Benedictine Monastery of Fonte Avellana, among the Apennines of Umbria, where Dante himself sojourned for a time in 1318, with his friend the prior, Fra Moricone. Here Peter Damian lived a life of extreme asceticism ; till, in 1057, Stephen IX. made him cardinal bishop of Ostia. In this capacity, he launched forth the most furious invectives against all who differed from him, in matters great or small : beginning with Hildebrand himself (who, however, was not yet Pope), to whom he wrote the most abusive letters, with or without provocation ; and ending with the poor bishop of Florence, whom he rated soundly for once playing a game of chess, and obliged him, by way of penance, to recite the psalter three times, to wash the feet of twelve poor men, and to give to each a piece of money. This stern and fiery monk died at Faenza of a fever, on the 22nd of February, 1072, at the age of eighty-three.

V. 109.—“*A height is there, named Catria.*”

Monte Catria, a spur of the Apennines, is in Umbria, near the confines of Tuscany, about twenty miles north-east of Gubbio.

V. 118-120.—“*That convent, wont to give in days of old,
Fruit amply to those heavens, hath now a store
So vain, its evil deeds must soon be told.*”

The disorders of the monastery of Fonte Avellana became so great after a time, that it was taken from the Benedictines, and given to the Camaldolesi.

V. 121-123.—“*There Peter Damian was the name I bore ;
Pier the Sinner dwelt in cloisters vow'd
Unto our Lady on the Adrian shore.*”

There have been many controversies regarding this passage. Some manuscripts, instead of “*Pietro Peccator fu,*” have “*Pietro Peccator fui;*” thus making Peter Damian say that he himself was Pier the Sinner, who had dwelt in the cloisters vowed to the Madonna on the Adriatic shore. And it may be so; for Peter Damian was in the habit of calling himself “the Sinner.” But it does not appear that he ever lived in a monastery at Ravenna, “on the Adrian shore;” or even that there was, in his days, a convent dedicated to the Madonna there at all. In fact, it is rather believed that there was no monastery of St. Mary near Ravenna, until Pietro degli Onesti (who was also surnamed the Sinner, on account of his irreligious life in his youth) built the church and convent of S. Maria in Porto Fuori, about two miles from the city. This he did in consequence of a vow made during a storm at sea in 1096. There this Pietro degli Onesti lived, and there he died and is buried. It is extremely probable that, in the time of Dante, popular

belief had mixed up the life and histories of these two monks, and that he here intended to set the matter to rights. But in this he has signally failed ; for the meaning of the passage is by no means clear : this being one of the lost cantos, in which the writing may have been partly obliterated by damp. Either interpretation, however, may very well be the true one.

CANTO XXII.

V. 28, 29.—“*And then the largest and the loveliest orb
Of all those pearls toward me swiftly prest.*”

He who now advances is St. Benedict, patriarch of the western monks ; who was born at Norcia, in Umbria, about 480. He was sent to Rome for his education, but, horrified at the wickedness he saw there, he fled to Subiaco, where he lived for many years ; the three first of which were spent in a cave like a wild beast's den. Afterwards he went to Monte Cassino. His biographer says : “On the acclivity of this hill was a deep recess, containing a very old temple, where Apollo was worshipped by the foolish rustic people after the fashion of the ancient heathens. On all sides round flourished groves, consecrated to the worship of devils, in which even at that time a mad multitude of unbelievers used to busy themselves with sacrilegious sacrifices. Here then, when the man of God arrived, he shattered the image, overturned the altar, fired the groves, and in the very temple of Apollo erected a chapel to the Virgin Mary, and, where the altar of Apollo had been, a chapel to St. John ; and began by continual preaching to invite the multitude around him to embrace the faith.” This was the

origin of the celebrated Abbey of Monte Cassino, the foundation of which the saint laid in 529, at the age of forty-nine. This was in the third year of Justinian's reign, when Athalaric was King of the Goths in Italy, and Felix IV. Pope. Strangely enough, the founder of the learned Benedictines was not himself a man of learning. St. Gregory the Great said of him that he was "learnedly ignorant and wisely unlearned ;" and he preferred his monastic rule to all others. Yet Benedict was not even a priest. But popular belief endowed him with the gift of prophecy ; and it is said that in his interview with Totila, the Saint spoke thus : "You do a great deal of mischief, and I foresee you will do more. You will take Rome ; you will cross the sea, and will reign nine years longer : but death will overtake you in the tenth, when you shall be arraigned before a just God to give an account of your conduct." Totila was seized with fear, and recommended himself to his prayers. From that day the tyrant became more humane ; and, when he took Naples shortly after, treated it with less cruelty than might have been expected. Ten years after, Totila was no more. It is also related that when the bishop of Canusa said to the saint, that Totila would leave Rome a heap of stones and that it would be no longer inhabited, he answered : "No ; but it shall be beaten with storms, and shall be like a tree which withers by the decay of its root."

St. Benedict died the year after his interview with Totila ; that is, on the 21st of March 543, at the age of sixty-three ; having spent fourteen years at Monte Cassino.

By the rule of the founder, seven hours a day were allotted for manual labour, and two for pious reading ; but the manual labour was, in most cases, soon exchanged for study ; the Benedictines being the most learned of the Monastic Orders, and the best supplied with libraries. They are also noted for

the extreme magnificence of their conventional establishments. Monte Cassino itself is one of the wonders of Italy. Within its lordly cloisters, supported by the pillars of the old temple of Apollo which it destroyed, none might dwell who was not of noble birth and independent fortune ; and its Abbot formerly held the rank of first baron of the kingdom. In its library were preserved treasures of literature, ancient, mediæval, and modern : the poems of Theocritus and Ovid ; the Vision of Frate Alberico, supposed to have given Dante the first idea of the Divine Comedy ; and one of the earliest manuscripts of the Divine Comedy itself.

Many and celebrated are the monasteries of this Order. Among the chestnut forests of La Cava, near Naples, is the beautiful convent of the S. Trinità, with its rich tombs of glowing mosaic dimly seen in those strange rock-hewn caves. In the Roman Campagna, beside the Tiber, rises that basilica, mean and plain without, but within, like a gorgeous dream : for S. Paolo Fuori le Mura is also attached to a Benedictine Monastery—a monastery wherein dwelt the learned and gentle Padre Chiaramonte, whose name is written on the entrance of one of the Vatican's glorious marble halls, and whose melancholy, thoughtful face, sculptured by Thorwaldsen, seems sadly to watch the passers-by in the most wondrous temple on earth : for Chiaramonte is better known in history as Pius VII.

Our own Fountains Abbey, too, was Benedictine ; so was Cluny, of which Hildebrand was prior ; and so was that lonely, majestic pile, S. Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna, among the marshes and the water-lilies.

But it would be too long to enumerate here the great monasteries of this Order, or the learned men whom they produced ; for, indeed, it must be confessed that, during the Dark Ages, all knowledge, all literature, all the treasures of antiquity, were preserved by the monks of St. Benedict.

V. 49.—“*Macarius here and Romualdo go.*”

St. Macarius was a citizen of Alexandria, and originally a confectioner. He retired into the desert of the Thebais about the year 335. In different parts of these Egyptian deserts he lived as an anchorite for sixty years, practising the most extraordinary austerities. It is related of him, that, having one day inadvertently killed a gnat which was biting him, he was greatly distressed at having thereby lost an opportunity of suffering some annoyance: he therefore went immediately to the desert of Sceté, where the mosquitos are fiercer and more abundant than in any other part of Egypt; and there remained six months, till, on his return, his face was so swollen and disfigured by the bites of those insects, that he was recognised only by his voice.

St. Romualdo, founder of the monks of Camaldoli, was, like Pietro Peccator, of the Onesti family, and was born at Ravenna about 956. In his early days he led a gay life, like other youths; but even then, when hunting in the lovely pine-forest, he would sometimes leave his sport, and meditate solemnly in those bright, flowery glades. At length, being obliged by his father to be his second in a duel wherein his adversary was killed, Romualdo was so distressed and horrified at this fatal result, that he retired for forty days to S. Apollinare in Classe. At the end of this time, he resolved to become a monk, and remained there seven years. After which, he went, first, to the neighbourhood of Venice, and then to the wilds of Catalonia. Here the people had a very high opinion of him, but showed their regard in rather an unpleasant manner. For, when the Saint proposed to return to Italy, they were so distressed at the idea of losing him altogether, that they decided on killing him and keeping his body! To escape this danger, St. Romualdo feigned himself mad; and the people, thinking a madman could

be of no great use to them, either dead or alive, let him go. He then went and lived in a cell, among the marshes near Ravenna. The rest of his life was spent in various lonely hermitages. He died on the 19th of June, 1027.

Alban Butler says : "The most famous of all his monasteries is that of Camaldoli, near Arezzo in Tuscany, thirty miles east from Florence, founded by him about the year 1009. It lies beyond a mountain very difficult to pass over, the descent from which on the opposite side is almost a direct precipice looking down on a pleasant large valley, which then belonged to a lord called *Maldoli*, who gave it to the Saint ; and from him it retained the name *Camaldoli*, contracted from *Campo Maldoli*. In this place St. Romualdo built a monastery, and by the several observances he added to St. Benedict's rule, gave birth to that new Order called Camaldoli, in which he united the cenobitic and eremitical life." To this first Camaldolesian hermitage Dante alludes in the Purgatorio, Canto V., in describing the death of Buonconte di Montefeltro.

V. 112. — “*O glorious star divine,*” &c.

The constellation of Gemini, which Dante has just entered. He was born in May, and imputes his gift of genius to this, his natal star.

V. 142.—“*Hyperion, thy son, in light array'd.*”

Hyperion is, according to Hesiod, the father of the sun.

V. 144.—“*Anear him, Maia and Dionë stay'd.*”

Maia was mother of Mercury, and Dione of Venus ; thus they are here mentioned instead of those planets.

CANTO XXIII.

V. 26.—“*Fair Trivia smiles among the nymphs etern.*”

Trivia is one of the names of Diana.

CANTO XXV.

V. 17, 18.—“*Behold the mighty Prince, of whom below
Ye in Galicia do the praise proclaim.*”

At St. Jago di Compostella. Dante, however, here makes a mistake : it is St. James the Great who is the patron saint of Spain, and who, according to the legend, appeared, riding a white horse, and led the Spanish army against the heathens ; whereas it was St. James the Less who wrote the epistle which bears his name, and to which Dante afterwards alludes.

V. 101, 102.—“*In sooth, had Cancer such a crystal shrine,
Winter should have a month of one sole day.*”

During all that winter month, when the sun is in Capricorn, Cancer of course rises at sunset ; thus, if this constellation shone with the brightness of the spirit of St. John the Evangelist, whom Dante now looks on, the winter night would be as bright as day.

V. 124.—“*In earth, my corpse is earth.*”

Dante, remembering the words that Christ spake of St. John, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?” has looked earnestly, supposing that the Saint may be there in body as well as in spirit ; but is now undeceived.

V. 127, 128.—“*Two only might the shore of bliss attain,
With twofold garb.*”

The Italian commentators invariably explain this to mean Christ and the Virgin Mary; but why should Dante thus completely ignore Enoch and Elijah? We may suppose him to mean that only two merely human souls have ascended in the flesh; and in that case the latter interpretation would be best, as being most scriptural; putting aside, of course, the fabled legend of the Assumption of the Madonna. If Dante means two who have not tasted death, this explanation would be the more correct; but there are certainly some difficulties in the context.

CANTO XXVI.

V. 147, 148.—“*From the first hour to that which aye doth stand
Beyond the sixth, when Day its quadrant
doth fulfil.*”

Dante supposes Adam to have remained in Paradise from sunrise till one hour after noon; that is, during seven hours. But here Milton’s theory is far more beautiful.

CANTO XXVII.

V. 41.—“*With blood of Linus, Cletus, and with mine.*”

St. Linus of Volterra, the second bishop of Rome, and St. Anacletus of Athens, the fourth according to most authorities. Linus is mentioned by St. Paul, in his second Epistle to

Timothy. Anacletus received ordination from St. Peter himself, and erected an oratory, A.D. 90, on the site of the present church of St. Peter's, to mark the spot where the Apostle was buried.

V. 44.—“*Sixtus, Calixtus, Pius, Urban.*”

Some of the earlier bishops of Rome : Pius was contemporary with the Emperor Hadrian ; Calixtus was martyred under Caracalla.

V. 58, 59.—“*Those of Cahors and Gascony our blood
Prepare to drink.*”

John XXII. was a native of Cahors in Guienne ; Clement V. was a Gascon.

V. 68-70. —“*Our air sheds down the snow-flakes, when the horn
Of the clear-glittering Goat of heaven on high
Touches the Sun.*”

When the sun is in Capricorn ; that is, from the middle of December till the middle of January.

V. 98.—“*From Leda’s lovely nest now sent me forth.*”

Dante now passes from the constellation of Gemini, which is among the fixed stars, and rises into the Primum Mobile.

V. 106-108. ——— “*The motion which doth shed
Stillness upon the midst, and all the rest
Doth move in circuit.*”

Dante believed that the Earth was motionless, and that all the spheres circled round it, with an impulse derived from the Primum Mobile.

V. 142, 143.—“*Ere the last month of winter pass to spring,
(For the small fraction ye on earth neglect).*”

Those fractions neglected in the regulation of the calendar by Julius Cæsar would have, after many years, brought January into spring; but this inexactitude was observed and corrected by Pope Gregory XIII. in 1582.

CANTO XXVIII.

V. 133.—“*But Gregory a different path did try.*”

St. Gregory the Great differed with Dionysius the Areopagite concerning the angelic hierarchy.

CANTO XXIX.

V. 1.—“*When both the children of Latona stand.*”

The sun and moon.

V. 4-6.—“*Even for the space of time which it doth take
To free them from the equipoise, erewhile
Held by the zenith,*” &c.

The space of time during which the sun and moon are both on the horizon, as it were balanced by the zenith, is but an instant; thus the smile of Beatrice was momentary.

V. 104, 105.—“*Less store of those who are or Lapo hight,
Or Bindo.*”

These are common Christian names in Florence: Lapo is one

of the many contractions for Giacopo, and Bindo, I believe, for Aldobrando.

V. 127.—“*And thus St. Anton’s swine grow fat, each day.*”

St. Antony is very commonly represented with a pig, because he is believed to have always kept one as a pet. At this day, in some parts of Italy, two pigs are kept in the streets, and fed by the public, as “animals of St. Antony,” in honour of that Saint. They have generally a piece cut off one ear, to signify whose property they are.

CANTO XXX.

V. 136, 137. — “*the great Henry, who shall wear
On earth the crown of Cæsar.*”

The Emperor Henry VII., commonly called Henry of Luxembourg. He was crowned with the Iron Crown of Lombardy, at Milan, in 1311 ; and afterwards at the Lateran with the Imperial diadem : but died at Sienna, soon after, August 24th, 1313, of ague, or rather malaria-fever. His death was a great blow to the Ghibellines, from which, indeed, they never entirely recovered.

V. 146-148. — “*God shall send
Him down where Simon Magus hath his meed ;
He of Alagna then to lower depths shall wend.*”

Clement V. became Pope in 1305, and died in 1314. Dante here (writing as if in 1300) prophesies that this Pope will soon go down among those punished in Hell for simony. “He of Alagna” is Boniface VIII., who reigned from 1294 to 1303. (See Inferno, Canto XIX.)

CANTO XXXI.

V. 31, 33. — *“from the distant shore
Above which Helicë for aye doth speed.”*

Helice, or Callisto, with her son Arcas, was changed by Jupiter into the constellation of the Great Bear, which is always visible to the nations of the north.

V. 36.—*“When Lateran did all mortal things exceed.”*

Alluding to the Jubilee of 1300, when pilgrims flocked into Rome from all quarters. In those days, before the Papal Court was removed to Avignon, the Lateran Palace was the residence of the popes.

V. 60.—*“A venerable Form to me drew nigh.”*

St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, who preached the second Crusade. He was a Burgundian, born in 1091 among the Côte d'Or hills, at his father's feudal castle of Fontaines : and became a monk of Citeaux, from whence he founded Clairvaux. Here his mental activity was prodigious : he preached the most marvellously eloquent sermons ; he wrote letters on every imaginable subject, from the highest doctrines of Christianity, down to the stealing of pigs. Lending and borrowing books too was frequently^{*} the subject of his correspondence ; and the twelfth century seems very much to have resembled the nineteenth in this one respect, that the volumes lent were not always returned. No one preached the Crusades more fervently than he ; but his reasons for rejoicing at the departure of the Crusaders are curious. He says : “The most joyful and salutary result to be perceived is, that in such a multitude of

men who flock to the East, there are few besides vagabonds, scoundrels, thieves, murderers, perjurors, and adulterers, from whose emigration a double good is observed to flow, the cause of a twofold joy." In short, there was the double advantage, that Christendom got rid of this ill-conditioned multitude, and the Infidels received the burden of them !

After having been the chief mover of all the important events of Europe during thirty years, St. Bernard died, in 1153, aged sixty-two. Throughout his life he was noted for his great and peculiar devotion to the Virgin Mary. This extraordinary man, who excelled in all things, great and small, and who possessed the most wonderful power of bending and attracting the minds of men, has been called the Last of the Fathers of the Church.

V. 104, 105. — “*to gaze
On our Veronica.*”

The portrait of our Lord, said to have been miraculously imprinted on a handkerchief given to him by a pious woman on his way to Calvary.

CANTO XXXIII.

V. 65, 66.—“*Thus on the wind were scatter'd the light leaves,
Which bore, of old, the sentence Sibylline.*”

The Cumæan Sibyl wrote her prophecies on leaves, which she placed at the entrance of her cave ; but the wind often dispersed them before they were taken up and read, and thus they became confused and unintelligible.

V. 146-151.—“*I do but know there flash'd a 'wilderling light,
O'er me, of perfect joy made visible.
At this high glory fail'd mine earthly might :
But yet no discontent my bliss did mar,
Impell'd, as speeds a circling wheel aright,
Even by the Love which moves the sun and
every star.”*

It is interesting to compare these last cantos with Plato's description of the movement of the spheres, in the tenth Book of his Republic. There are many resemblances ; but there are also great differences. For where the Athenian Sage saw all things turning on the adamantine distaff of Necessity, with the daughters of Necessity, the crowned and white-robed Fates, singing to the harmony of the Syrens ; Lachesis singing the Past, Clotho the Present, and Atropos the Future, the Christian Poet beholds the sun and moon and stars of heaven all moved by Divinest Love, and the music is the song of the Redeemed.

Like also, and yet most unlike, are the simple words of an English poet older than Chaucer, and as old as the mighty Florentine himself. Thus Richard of Hampoole described the joys of Paradise :—

“There is lyf withoute ony deth,
And there is youthe withoute ony elde,
And there is alle manner welth to welde :
And there is reste withoute ony travaille,
And there is peace withoute ony strife,
And there is alle manner likynge of life ;
And there is bright somer ever to be :
And there is never wynter in that cuntree :
And there is more worshipe and honour
Than ever hadde king other emperour.

And there is greater melodie of aungeles songe,
And there is preysing him amonge :
And there is alle manner friendshipe that may be,
And there is evere perfect love and charitie ;
And there is wisdom without folye,
And there is honestie without vilenaye.
Alle these a man may joyes of Hevene call,
Ae yette the most sovereign joye of alle
Is the sight of Goddes bright face,
In whom resteth alle manner grace.”

THE END.

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